

THE BERLIN MOMENT IN AN AGE OF PERIL: AMERICAN PRESS COVERAGE
OF THE 1958 BERLIN CRISIS

by

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ABSTRACT

U.S. press coverage of the 1958 Berlin Crisis through Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's 1959 visit to the United States reveals the extent to which American newsprint reinforced President Eisenhower's image as he changed his approach to foreign policy. The press helped Eisenhower maintain his reputation of strength and the support of the American public as he abandoned his hardliner platform in favor of peaceful negotiations with the Soviet Union. The structure and language used by journalists and editors involved in Eisenhower's covert propaganda initiative, Operation Candor, placed Americans and Berliners in solidarity and reinforced the implications of a military conflict over Berlin. Moreover, American newsprint laid the groundwork for resolution of the crisis and relief of tension through diplomatic rather than military action. Shifting the tone from aggressive rollback to strength through peace, the media helped Eisenhower transform his foreign policy while maintaining his steadfast reputation. Likewise, American newsprint alternated its depiction of Khrushchev between a belligerent boogey-man and a bluffing buffoon, fostering fear at times and mockery at others. Rather than characterize it as a sign of weakness or submission, the media reported favorably on Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev to visit the United States and to talk informally about the German question. The result was a propagandistic picture of Eisenhower as both a cold warrior and a brilliant strategist for peace who called the bluff of the Soviet leader.

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INTRODUCTION

Dwight Eisenhower began his first presidential term during the dawn of the atomic era.¹ Despite his belligerent, anticommunist campaign rhetoric, the catastrophic ramifications of atomic confrontation precipitated a shift in Eisenhower's strategy. Throughout his presidency, Eisenhower recruited the American press in efforts to balance his strong, steadfast image with conciliatory efforts to avoid armed conflict with the Soviet Union. In the midst of the tumult and uncertainty surrounding the changing Soviet leadership and nuclear technological advancements, Eisenhower delivered his Atoms for Peace speech to the United Nations General Assembly in New York on December 8, 1953.² The speech helped launch Operation Candor, a domestic propaganda program that allowed Eisenhower to espouse hollow rhetoric of "rollback" and military action on behalf of non-communist allies. Due to his close connections with American news media, Eisenhower maintained his cold warrior reputation and the support of the American people, despite his eventual default on rollback and retracted commitment to intervention in East Europe.³

¹ William L. Laurence, "Drama of the Atomic Bomb Found Climax in July 16 Test," *New York Times*, September 26, 1945. Journalist William L. Laurence of the *New York Times* first used this term in a 1945 article. It gained popularity, and various journalists used the phrases "atomic age" and "atomic era" consistently throughout the early 1950s.

² B.W. Cook, *The De-Classified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare* (New York: Doubleday, 1981). General Secretary of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin died March 5, 1953, leaving an unsettled, collective leadership in his wake. Among the three potential successors, Georgy Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov and Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev emerged as Secretary of the Communist Party in 1953, but did not fully cement his power as Soviet Premier until 1958. For an outstanding analysis of the power struggle, see William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 249-255.

³ Shawn Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda: The Truman and Eisenhower Administrations' Covert Manipulation of News," *Western Journal of Communication* 60, no. 2 (Spring, 1994): 270.

Eisenhower promoted Operation Candor as a way to educate the American people on nuclear weapons and their potential. To distribute his message effectively, Eisenhower developed personal and professional relationships with journalists and media executives. Whether as members of or outside consultants to the President's Committee on International Information Activities, these individuals helped Eisenhower shape his image through Washington-approved language in American newsprint. Once media moguls left Eisenhower's program to return to their respective outlets, the relationships continued, as did Eisenhower's favorable portrayal in the news.⁴ This remarkably effective program not only won Eisenhower the support of the major domestic media outlets, but it began what historian Shawn Parry-Giles calls "camouflaged propaganda."⁵ By publicly promoting "candor" with the American people while distributing government-approved information through the free press, Eisenhower influenced the hearts and minds of Americans throughout his time in office.

The Eisenhower administration worked with the press in transforming its image and promoting strength through peace rather than through military action. Eisenhower realized the risks of rollback early on and used his Atoms for Peace campaign to ensure American public support of atomic energy testing for benevolent purposes.⁶ Hoping to amass an atomic arsenal as a proactive deterrent to conflict with the U.S.S.R., Eisenhower adopted a zealous altruistic tone to gain approval for ambitious atomic

⁴ Kenneth Osgood, "Eisenhower's Dilemma: Talking Peace and Waging Cold War," in *Selling War in a Media Age* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010). The Jackson Committee, which contained media moguls and received input from various members of news media outlets, was a major element of Operation Candor. This committee remained in operation from 1953 to 1956.

⁵ Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda," 272.

⁶ B.W. Cook, *De-Classified Eisenhower*, 110.

buildup. The press, in turn, portrayed Eisenhower as the level-headed, peaceful diplomat while casting the Soviet Union as the belligerent enemy. It did not criticize the administration's lack of promised intervention in insurgent Soviet satellite states.⁷ Even when the Soviet Union directly issued an ultimatum to the United States and the Western powers occupying Berlin, newsprint maintained strong support for Eisenhower's inaction.

Despite the American media's depiction of Khrushchev as an aggressive warmonger, his policies suggested otherwise. Consistently championing a line of "peaceful coexistence" with the West, Nikita Khrushchev delivered an unexpected speech at the Moscow Sports Palace on November 10, 1958. Following criticism of his prospective plans for peaceful competition, Khrushchev challenged the Western powers' occupation of Berlin with an ultimatum.⁸ The premier declared that if all Western powers did not evacuate the city of West Berlin within six months, he would leave East Germany in the hands of East German Chancellor Walter Ulbricht. Although the Western powers had refused to formally acknowledge the East German government, in transferring checkpoints and communication lines to East Germany, Khrushchev would potentially force Western recognition.⁹ Moreover, in order to gain access to West Berlin, the Western powers would have to deal directly with East German government officials.¹⁰

⁷ Charles Gati, *Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-73.

⁸ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 396-415.

⁹ Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 219.

¹⁰ Richard Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente: American Diplomacy in the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1963*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), xi.

West Berlin, a capitalist city within communist territory, relied heavily on financial support from its occupying powers. Likewise, the existence of a flourishing capitalist economy inside communist East Germany was an invaluable propaganda tool for the West.¹¹ The Eisenhower administration recognized that Khrushchev's threats were likely inflated rhetoric designed to pressure the West into acknowledging the East German puppet state.¹² In the emerging nuclear age, however, Eisenhower and Dulles maintained restraint in Germany to prevent escalating tensions, despite their public pledge to hold Berlin at all costs, "if need be by military force."¹³

By mid-1959, Khrushchev had extended his daunting deadline numerous times—each extension chipping away at the credibility of his threats.¹⁴ Throughout the year he hinted at prospective roundtable discussions, as well as a visit to the United States to speak with Eisenhower informally about the situation. In August, Eisenhower publically announced Khrushchev's invitation, and the Premier began his tour in September the same year.¹⁵ Rather than a signal of weakness, American newsprint applauded Eisenhower's initiative to receive Khrushchev as a guest of the United States. Despite the break from his former position of military might in the face of communist domination, the media did not suggest that the president had bent to Khrushchev's will. Instead, newspapers emphasized Eisenhower's strategic mastery of the bluffs of a dictator along

¹¹ See Robert L. Ivie, et. al., *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

¹² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis, 1958-1959*, John P. Glennon and Charles S. Sampson, eds., Document 31.

¹³ John Foster Dulles, Press Conference, November 7, 1959, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v08/d23>.

¹⁴ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), xi-xii.

¹⁵ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 393.

with what they deemed an admirable commitment to peace between the United States and the Soviet Union. In this regard, both leaders actually got what they wanted. While Khrushchev did not achieve East German recognition, he did get a meeting with Eisenhower to discuss the matter as equals. Eisenhower, in contrast, received credit for standing up to the Soviets and standing firm with his allies, while avoiding the potentially catastrophic military engagement that might have followed his original rollback promises.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

While historians have yet to fully examine American media during the Berlin Crisis and the Khrushchev visit, many have analyzed Eisenhower's diplomatic actions and motivations, as well as the administration's hidden influence in media propaganda campaigns. The dominant historiographical debates of the early Cold War and the Eisenhower administration center upon two specific questions. First, historians debate whether the United States or the Soviet Union perpetuated the Cold War. Moreover, scholars question whether Eisenhower's diplomatic tactics exacerbated Cold War tensions, or whether his actions ushered in a short-lived *détente*.

To answer this question, my project focuses specifically on Eisenhower's actions regarding West Berlin and East Germany alongside American media coverage of the Berlin Crisis and Khrushchev's visit to America. Eisenhower's propaganda campaign to garner support for Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's West Berlin, in tandem with efforts to prevent nuclear war and military engagement, reveal a short-term armistice between the United States and the USSR. Newsprint's laudatory language of Eisenhower's peaceable turn and carefully worded articles conveying government-sanctioned views on Berlin bolstered public support for a moderate *détente* with the Soviet Union. Commenting on the insignificance of Khrushchev's ultimatum in conjunction with Eisenhower's steadfast strength, newsprint reassured a fearful American public. Under Washington's direction, newsprint functioned to alleviate Cold War anxieties by displaying Eisenhower's strength through peace.

Moreover, my research reveals how comic portrayals of Khrushchev throughout his American tour replaced threatening images of a dangerous dictator with a foolish,

laughable caricature. As journalists reduced American apprehension, they unintentionally complemented Khrushchev, lavishing him with the attention he desired through their incessant pursuit and coverage of his every move. After Khrushchev returned to the Soviet Union, congenial communications between the two world powers continued. Unfortunately, however, Eisenhower himself reversed the progress in U.S.-Soviet relations in the aftermath of the U-2 spy plane incident.

Secondly, historians debate whether or not Eisenhower served as the primary policymaker during his presidency. The earliest scholarship on the administration pointed to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles as the prime orchestrator of foreign policy.¹ Revisionist scholarship emphasized Eisenhower's dominant role, and subsequent scholars have argued for a consensus view in which both Dulles and Eisenhower shared decision making responsibilities.² The evolution of this debate is paramount for scholars who maintain that the U.S. prolonged Cold War antagonism. As some have argued, if Dulles is responsible for the Eisenhower administration's foreign policy decisions, he bears the blame for perpetuating the Cold War.³ My project maintains the consensus view to a degree, but highlights the president's overarching control over foreign policy. While he and Dulles undoubtedly worked in tandem throughout Dulles's time in the Eisenhower

¹ Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

² For scholarship pointing to Eisenhower as the dominant policymaker, see Cook, *De-Classified Eisenhower*; Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look: National Security Policy, 1953-1961* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For consensus views, see Frederik Marks, *Power and Peace: The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles* (Westport: Praeger, 1995); Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente*; Chris Tudda, *The Truth is Our Weapon: The Rhetorical Diplomacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006);

³ Hoopes, *Devil and Dulles*, 310-311.

administration, the major break in U.S.-Soviet relations under Eisenhower occurred after Dulles had already passed away. The president made the decision to approve the U2 spy plane that reversed the progress. As a result, my work does not support the accusations that Dulles exacerbated the Cold War rivalry.

Adding to the debate over conflict versus détente in Eisenhower's foreign policy, Stephen Brady and Richard Williamson both examine the president's commitment to NATO unity and to Adenauer, but draw fundamentally divergent conclusions. Brady argues that Eisenhower's allegiance to Adenauer, as well as his dedication to a strong, unified NATO, led Eisenhower to miss opportunities for disarmament and a true détente. Eisenhower perpetuated Cold War hostilities by prioritizing his commitment to Adenauer and West Germany at the expense of substantial disarmament talks with the U.S.S.R.⁴ In contrast, Williamson highlights the Eisenhower administration's propensity to embrace diplomacy over military action. He argues that Eisenhower's willingness to negotiate allowed for the "first steps toward détente" with the Soviet Union. Whereas Brady deems the Adenauer alliance an obstacle in U.S.-Soviet mediations, Williamson asserts that Eisenhower's diplomatic foresight and dedication to strengthening the Western allied front on behalf of West Germany led to an easing of tensions between the two superpowers. Because of the inconsistencies among the NATO allies' commitments in Germany, Eisenhower sought to avoid military confrontation over Berlin. He worried that a disjointed Western alliance in divided Germany would prove disastrous for Berlin as well as for the Western position worldwide. As Eisenhower maintained a united Western front and opted

⁴ Stephen Brady, *Eisenhower and Adenauer: Alliance Maintenance Under Pressure, 1953-1960* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010).

for diplomacy over military engagement, Khrushchev consistently suspended the deadlines for his Berlin ultimatum. Rather than a hindrance to détente, Eisenhower's Berlin diplomacy initiated cooperation with the Soviet Union.⁵

Scholars Ira Chernus and Kenneth Osgood analyze the Eisenhower administration's Cold War propaganda and conclude that while psychological warfare prevented military and nuclear action, it contributed to the continuation of a tumultuous U.S.-Soviet relationship. Chernus argues that, although Eisenhower kept the Cold War from turning hot, he also had no expectations or even goals of pursuing peaceful reconciliation with the Soviet Union. In what Chernus calls "apocalypse management," Eisenhower's rhetoric described the Soviet Union as a permanent threat, assuring perpetual American anxiety over apocalyptic, nuclear destruction at the hands of the enemy. Exploiting such fears, Eisenhower sought to ensure Americans' unwavering support for Washington's Cold War policies, including nuclear testing and arms buildup. As a result, Chernus posits, Eisenhower's Cold War strategy created a sense of national fear and insecurity.⁶

In conjunction, Osgood maintains that although Eisenhower's psychological warfare and propaganda prevented military engagement, they also contributed to the continuation of the Cold War. He writes, "the imperative of shaping, influencing and at times manipulating public opinion pervaded the entire U.S. approach to the Cold War."⁷ Rather than conducting serious negotiations with the Soviet Union, particularly over

⁵ Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente*, 3.

⁶ Ira Chernus, *Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 126.

⁷ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 363.

disarmament, Eisenhower directed his efforts toward accruing public support for the American position. Osgood asserts that Eisenhower “attached far greater value to waging and winning the Cold War than to ending it through negotiations.”⁸ Promoting a moral, benevolent image overseas, Eisenhower waged a covert Cold War outside of the public eye. Meticulous dissemination of government-approved information became inseparable from foreign policy, and, according to Osgood, negotiations occurred solely for propagandistic purposes.⁹

Whereas Chernus posits that Eisenhower’s fearful, apocalyptic language perpetuated Cold War tensions, Richard Immerman and Robert Bowie argue that the administration’s tough rhetoric coupled with peaceful negotiations created a long term, proactive approach that produced an atmosphere of peace. Eisenhower established a powerful military and a large defense arsenal to prevent war before it started. Furthermore, he strengthened the economy, assuring American vigor outside of the military arena. The New Look policy, they contend, initiated a systemized, diplomatic approach to easing enmities between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, while laying the groundwork for a strong free world to combat the expansion of communism. Despite interparty criticisms of his alleged lack of aggression and pressure on the Soviet Union, Bowie and Immerman conclude that Eisenhower built the foundation for rollback in the Third World through diplomatic and economic influence. In their somewhat partisan examination, Bowie and

⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁹ Ibid., 4.

Immerman describe Eisenhower's plan as a long term, peaceful solution to Cold War tensions, rather than a strategy of short term reactions.¹⁰

In agreement with Bowie and Immerman, B.W. Cook contends that Eisenhower's determination to maintain peace and his aversion to the potential perils of nuclear war launched the beginnings of détente with the Soviet Union. She argues that Eisenhower's resistance to military action led him to favor psychological and political warfare through propaganda and economic expansion. Cook discusses at length Eisenhower's covert overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala and other clandestine operations early in his presidency. She concludes that Eisenhower used psychological and political warfare to promote U.S. economic interests and combat communism covertly, without American military commitment, creating propaganda to display communism as "unattractive and unnecessary" in the Third World.¹¹

Analyzing Eisenhower's public persona alongside his covert actions, scholars Jeffrey Tulis and Chris Tudda blame Eisenhower for continuing the Cold War. Tulis looks specifically at Eisenhower's rhetoric surrounding nuclear weapons and technology. He argues that Eisenhower perpetuated Cold War anxieties through propaganda that displayed "Soviet peace and science in a context of fear and suspicion."¹² To ensure support for U.S. nuclear testing and arms buildup, as well as the overall expansion of the defense system, Eisenhower's Operation Candor portrayed the U.S. as a benevolent, peaceful "scientific superpower," and the only power to be trusted with atomic capabilities. Despite the

¹⁰ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 135. Robert Bowie served as Eisenhower's assistant secretary of state for policy planning from 1953 to 1957. Bowie's close relationship with the president and his policies allows for valuable first-hand information, but can, at times, reveal obvious biases.

¹¹ Cook, *De-Classified Eisenhower*, 115.

¹² Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 167.

appearance of candor, Eisenhower meticulously planned his disclosures to the American people. In the case of Operation Candor and Atoms for Peace, Eisenhower's seemingly honest, straightforward language advanced his atomic testing initiative, taking disarmament off the table.¹³

In a more nuanced examination of Eisenhower's public and private operations, Tudda posits that the inconsistencies between the Eisenhower and Dulles's espoused rhetoric and confidential goals perpetuated the U.S.-Soviet conflict and exacerbated the rifts between the U.S. and its NATO allies.¹⁴ The administration publically upheld militant, anti-communist rhetoric, both directly to the Soviet Union, as well as to the American public, in order to show strength in the midst of Cold War anxieties. Privately, however, the administration "confidentially pursued a policy of peaceful accommodation with Moscow and patience with the allies."¹⁵ The administration's private intentions to pursue amicable coexistence with the Soviet Union floundered as a result of its bellicose, anticommunist rhetoric. In publically displaying a strong, staunch stance against communism, the Eisenhower administration continued Cold War conflicts.¹⁶

While the effects and motivations are contested, the president declared candor and honesty with America as part of his propaganda initiative that granted public approval for atomic testing and arms buildup. Some scholars imply that Eisenhower's public rhetoric served as an end in itself to promote his own image, while others defend its representation of real foreign policy goals. My research builds upon the consensus points in all of these

¹³ Ibid., 163.

¹⁴ Tudda, *Truth is Our Weapon*, 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1-2.

scholars' works and confirms that Eisenhower, with the help of Dulles, based his Cold War strategy on maintaining the support of the American people through carefully constructed rhetoric. As historians of the Eisenhower administration debate whether his policies continued the conflict or built the foundations for peace with the Soviet Union, some credit the president with a short-lived *détente*, while others go so far as to claim that Eisenhower's approach to Cold War diplomacy initiated the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁷ My project charts Eisenhower's efforts to amend the U.S.-Soviet relationship and to at least peacefully tolerate the existence of the Soviet Union. However, I point specifically to the U-2 spy plane incident as the irreparable turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations under Eisenhower. Overall, my study of the Berlin crisis extends this previous scholarship of Eisenhower's relationship with the press to demonstrate how it functioned in the Berlin Crisis.

Further, my coverage of Khrushchev's trip to the United States prompts a necessary departure from the historiography of the Eisenhower administration to the scholarship of this momentous visit. While several works mention the trip, the dominant historiographical question remains whether Khrushchev's American tour accomplished anything diplomatically in either the short or long term.¹⁸

Journalist Peter Carlson has written the most comprehensive account of Khrushchev's visit to the United States. In his book, *K Blows Top*, he does not dissect the political importance of the visit or analyze the motivations behind press depictions of

¹⁷ Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente*, 211; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 205. Their argument for Eisenhower's influence in the Soviet collapse is not a widely shared argument.

¹⁸ For first-hand accounts of the trip by participants or journalists, see Wiley T. Buchanan, *Red Carpet at the White House* (Dutton, 1964); Dwight Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (Doubleday, 1965), 400-405, 438-439; Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Storm Has Many Eyes: A Personal Narrative* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 157-158, 173-177; Sergei Khrushchev, *Superpower*, 338.

Khrushchev. Instead, he tells a comedic story using the newspapers and magazines as his guide. Overall, Carlson captures the cultural significance of the bizarre fact that the leader of the Soviet Union achieved celebrity status in America over the course of eleven days. The West's most formidable foe became more human, even charming, to Americans as a result of the tour. This thesis builds on Carlson's work, but suggests that the oftentimes comedic coverage of Khrushchev also served clear policy objectives for Eisenhower. Aside from Carlson, no historians have focused primarily on the visit, although several reference and discuss it briefly.¹⁹

In *Khrushchev's Cold War* Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali provide one of the more valuable examinations of Khrushchev's visit. Their assessment of the visit's impact on Cold War relations, they argue that in the months after Khrushchev left the United States, U.S.-Soviet relations saw "one of the great pivots in the [Cold War]."²⁰ In particular, after seeing America for himself and talking informally with Eisenhower, "something profound had happened to the Soviet leader's assessment of the struggle with the United States."²¹ Not only did Khrushchev begin to try to Americanize Soviet cities, for a short period, he saw Eisenhower as his friend. Khrushchev's son, Sergei Khrushchev, in his book, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*, agrees with Fursenko and Naftali in their assessment of the importance of the visit for a short-lived détente. He argues that the visit, while unsuccessful in short term delegations, was

¹⁹ Peter Carlson, *K Blows Top: A Cold War Comic Interlude, Starring Nikita Khrushchev, America's Most Unlikely Tourist* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).

²⁰ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 241.

²¹ Ibid.

paramount in its progress toward “human understanding.”²² He writes that as a result of the visit, “the first glimmers of trust became visible.”²³

While William Taubman’s Pulitzer-prize winning biography, *Khrushchev: The Man and his Era*, barely mentions the visit in 800 pages of text, it does reveal Khrushchev’s obsession with coming to America and his anxiety about how to conduct himself with Eisenhower. Although Taubman does not credit the visit with much success, he asserts that Khrushchev’s mere presence in capitalist America was “‘progress’ enough on Berlin to justify the president’s endorsing the summit Khrushchev had so long been seeking.”²⁴ Like Fursenko and Naftali, Taubman provides a lengthy discussion about Khrushchev’s imagined friendship with Eisenhower after the visit and, to the dismay of his Soviet colleagues, his efforts to imitate American infrastructure in his own Soviet cities. While this thesis does not delve into the Soviet side of the visit, it does suggest that Eisenhower and the press used the visit to promote a less threatening, more manageable Khrushchev and downplay the need for aggressive U.S. action in Eastern Europe.

²² Sergei Khrushchev, *Superpower*, 345.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 425.

ARGUMENT AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis will analyze the media depiction of the Berlin Crisis from November 1958 through December 1959, encompassing media coverage of Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum, Eisenhower's diplomatic and rhetorical responses to the crisis, and Khrushchev's visit to the United States. Highlighting the implications of Eisenhower's Operation Candor and Atoms for Peace campaign, this research reveals how close relationships between the president and major media outlets allowed him to reverse his initial rollback position for diplomatic solutions in Berlin. With the help of favorable, carefully influenced media coverage, Eisenhower's reputation remained untarnished in the process.

The most widely consumed domestic newsprint, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Time*, alongside the correspondence and administrative records of Eisenhower, Dulles, and Christian Herter, illustrate that despite Eisenhower's hardliner reputation and his administration's supposed dedication to use any force necessary on behalf of West Berlin, Eisenhower never intended to act on these threats.¹ Although he clearly considered the Berlin Crisis a potentially serious engagement, his rhetoric of solidarity with the West Germans and the media's messages of sympathy for the East Germans spared the U.S. from military engagement on the front end. The message from both Eisenhower and from domestic newsprint was that the East Germans were not the enemy, and that fighting against East Germans, should Soviet soldiers evacuate, would prove counterproductive. Newspapers and magazines, by the beginning of 1959, laid the

¹ Christian Herter served as Under Secretary of State until Dulles's death in 1959 when he took over as Secretary of State.

groundwork for American support of a “sit tight” policy in West Berlin, absolving Eisenhower of any future military obligation in the city whether Khrushchev acted on his ultimatum or not.

American newsprint used language that supported diplomacy and negotiations with the Soviet Union, despite the President’s initial, widely supported rhetoric of military strength and rollback. Although he had campaigned on a hardliner platform, upon assuming office, Eisenhower transformed his position. The president framed his 1953 Atoms for Peace initiative to exacerbate American fears of the Soviet Union in his quest for public approval of atomic testing and arms buildup. He aimed to deter conflict through atomic technology and a nuclear arsenal. After Khrushchev initiated the Berlin Crisis, however, Eisenhower doubted the effectiveness of his deterrent strategy. Additionally, Soviet atomic capabilities remained a mystery. Therefore, by Khrushchev’s American tour, Eisenhower and the press had simultaneously shifted their rhetoric from fear to casual confidence. The press deemed Khrushchev’s ultimatum a bluff, dismissing the notion of military engagement over Berlin.

Eisenhower used his media connections to promote an image of strength through peace during the Berlin Crisis. Although the Eisenhower administration understood the risks of rollback and had no intention of allowing the German situation to escalate militarily, the president and Dulles continued to promote aggressive anti-communism in language only. In bolstering Eisenhower’s image, the press alternately depicted the Soviet Union as a nation of aggressive warmongers, and as a bluffing, inferior world power. In actuality, Khrushchev showed no evidence of wanting any military engagement with the

United States or the West. The Premier did not fit into either category in which the American press tried to place him.

In analyzing major newsprint's depictions of Khrushchev alongside records of Eisenhower's private correspondence, this thesis reveals the president's hidden influence in media coverage of Khrushchev's visit. As the press praised Eisenhower's bold, diplomatic invitation and his towering physical stature next to comical characterizations of Khrushchev, articles subtly reinforced the president's strength and calmed American fears of impending nuclear annihilation. The visit proved a huge short-term success. Eisenhower agreed to summit talks the following year, and the "spirit of Camp David" became a household term. Upon his return to the Soviet Union, the press referenced Khrushchev with amicable language in efforts to preserve the peaceful atmosphere. Unfortunately, the Eisenhower administration's U2 spy plane debacle reversed any progress in U.S.-Soviet relations.

Because television had not yet become the primary news source for the majority of Americans, this thesis relies primarily on the most widely read and distributed print news media sources, including *Time*, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.² Alongside newsprint, this project uses administrative records and presidential papers, speeches, and correspondence from to show the synchronicity between state action and media reports. In some instances policy follows press tone, while at other times media reacts to policy.

² William F. McCallister, ed., *N. W. Ayer and Son's Directory Newspapers and Periodicals 1958* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer and Son, Inc., 1958).

While this research does not delve into the Eisenhower administration's actions outside of the propaganda campaign between 1953 and 1958, chapter one provides a brief overview of Eisenhower's political transformation for context. Chapter two covers the Berlin crisis, focusing on media coverage as well as administration rhetoric, both private and public. The final chapter details Khrushchev's visit to America from its inception through December 1959. By the end of the year, Khrushchev and Eisenhower seemed to have initiated a friendship, or at least a solid understanding of one another. The conclusion adds a succinct synopsis of the U2 spy plane incident that destroyed the improvements in American-Soviet relations, as well as the potential friendship between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.

CHAPTER I: OPERATION CANDOR AND EISENHOWER'S PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

Dwight D. Eisenhower won the presidential election of 1952 with tenacious campaign promises of rollback and a rigid anti-communist platform. Rejecting his predecessor's subdued containment strategy, Eisenhower assured the American people that his administration would take an active, aggressive approach. He pledged to not only stop the spread of communism, but eliminate communist rule where it existed. After taking office, however, Eisenhower quickly recognized the futility of maintaining his belligerent position in the precarious nuclear age. As a result, he launched a covert propaganda initiative that relied on the support of private media outlets and the guidance of various influential media executives and government officials. With the help of independent newsprint and trusted advisors on psychological warfare, Eisenhower ensured his own favorable representation in the press as he set out to transform his image from a bellicose war hero to a masterfully diplomatic peacekeeper.

Truman's Legacy

In the aftermath of World War II, developments in atomic weaponry had become a preeminent concern for U.S. foreign policy officials.¹ As a result, on April 7, 1950, President Truman and the National Security Council Policy Planning Staff crafted a secret report addressing the looming Soviet threat. This document, NSC-68, or United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, detailed the expected escalation of

¹ The Soviet Union reported its first successful atomic weapons testing in 1949, sparking fear and an urgent sense of competition for the U.S. See Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus: History and Aftermath*, 7th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 465.

the Soviet Union's nuclear arms buildup and pressed for a comparable U.S. military response.² The Policy Planning Staff concluded that the economic and infrastructural devastation of World War II had left the U.S. and the Soviet Union the only global superpowers. Moreover, it reported that the two powers existed in total opposition to one another, and that "'violent and non-violent' conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union had become 'endemic.'"³

NSC-68 called for nuclear and conventional military expansion in efforts to discourage Soviet aggression. Moreover, the program highlighted the beneficial accompanying advancements for American scientific and military capabilities.⁴ Subsequent progress reports followed NSC-68 which, in addition to military buildup, called for psychological components as well as military preparation.⁵ NSC-68/3 explicitly called for "overt psychological warfare:"⁶

Development of programs designed to build and maintain confidence among other peoples in our strength and resolution, and to wage overt psychological warfare calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance and to frustrate the Kremlin in other ways...[and] [i]ntensification of affirmative and timely measures and operations by covert means in the fields of economic warfare and

² U.S. Department of State, *Milestones: 1945-1952*, "NSC-68, 1950," accessed November 3, 2014, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

³ Ibid.; U.S. National Security Council, "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," April 14, 1950, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

⁴ Institute for National Strategic Studies, *NSC-68: Forging the Strategy of Containment*, ed. S. Nelson Drew (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1996), accessed November 5, 2014, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/whitehouse/nsc68/nsc68.pdf>.

⁵ U.S. National Security Council, "Progress Report Regarding Psychological Warfare," Oct 17, 1950, in "President's Secretary's Files," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Harry S. Truman*, accessed November 5, 2014, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?pagenumber=2&documentdate=1950-10-17&documentid=ki-17-2.

⁶ U.S. National Security Council, "A Report to the National Security Council: NSC-68," April 12, 1950, in "President's Secretary's Files," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Harry S. Truman*, accessed November 5, 2014, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf.

political and psychological warfare with a view to fomenting and supporting unrest and revolt in selected strategic satellite countries.⁷

Following the report, the Truman administration sanctioned a monumental increase in covert informational programs such as Radio Free Europe (RFE).⁸ By 1952, Truman had authorized a 600 percent increase in propaganda and covert informational programs from the 1948 budget.⁹

President Truman recognized the potential in employing information programs such as RFE that disseminated information seemingly independent of government influence. Despite the important contributions of such programs in influencing Cold War perceptions overseas, by the end of Truman's first term, Republicans had begun to berate him for his lack of aggressive efforts against Soviet influence and expansion.¹⁰ To ensure a victory in the upcoming election, the GOP needed a new, tougher approach. Once Eisenhower accepted the presidential nomination in 1952, he immediately hit the campaign trail advocating vigorous plans to roll back communism. Although Eisenhower's forceful anti-communist rhetoric garnered support for his campaign, the covert psychological tactics of his predecessor soon proved far more effective than provoking confrontation with the Soviet Union. Ultimately, Eisenhower extended Truman's commitment to psychological warfare as a means of pivoting away from rollback.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Launched by the Truman administration in 1949, Radio Free Europe broadcasted Western political propaganda in Soviet satellite states throughout Eastern Europe. See Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

⁹ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 42-100.

¹⁰ Bennett Kovrig, *The Myth of Liberation: East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 113-130.

“We Need a Leadership Morally and Spiritually Strong”¹¹

War hero, devout Christian, and recently declared Republican, Eisenhower immediately established his religious, all-American image with the public. He assured the American people that he was no politician, and that he understood that Americans “preferred honesty to distortion.” He claimed: “The only way I know how to talk to is to talk plain.”¹² While not a career politician, Eisenhower was exceedingly competent in the art of manipulating public perception. The man who initially wavered in his decision to accept the Republican presidential nomination soon launched a foreign and domestic political strategy centered on a covertly imposed sense of American moral superiority.¹³ Cultivating the narrative of a courageous, godly America determined to protect the free world from the “danger of Godless communism,”¹⁴ Eisenhower masterfully united the American people in a war of ideologies, in which he assured Americans of their undisputed moral high ground.¹⁵

In addition to his “regular American” religious image, Eisenhower continually criticized containment as soft and deficient against the dangers of Communist expansion.

¹¹ “Eisenhower’s Prepared Text for Fined Major Address of Campaign at Boston,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 1952.

¹² “Prepared Text of Eisenhower’s Campaign Address at Buffalo Meeting,” *Washington Post*, October 22, 1952.

¹³ Douglass K. Daniel reveals that Eisenhower was surprisingly reluctant to run for office. Various newspaper publishers and journalists, including long-time supporters, helped persuade him to accept the nomination. See Douglass K. Daniel, “They Liked Ike: Pro-Eisenhower Publishers and His Decision to Run for President,” *J&MC Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 393-404. For a study of Eisenhower’s influence on television media, see Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace Prosperity and Prime-Time TV* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

¹⁴ “Eisenhower’s Prepared Text for Fined Major Address of Campaign at Boston,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 1952.

¹⁵ Shawn Parry-Giles, “The Eisenhower Administration’s Conceptualization of the USIA: The Development of Overt and Covert Propaganda Strategies,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 24, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 263-276.

Championing rollback and a hard line against the Soviet Communist enemy, he declared, “We must meet and repulse the Soviet menace, [as] it means to swallow up all the land, all the wealth, and all the peoples of the earth.”¹⁶ Rather than a complacent, containment initiative, Eisenhower championed a much more militant method. Assuring the American people that the United States remained “Communism’s final and greatest victim to be,”¹⁷ he perpetuated an aura of fear for the Soviet Union, ensuring American support for the bellicose Republican foreign policy.¹⁸

The press overwhelmingly backed Eisenhower’s campaign, advocating for his candidacy even before he received the nomination.¹⁹ As early as January 1951, a *New York Times* article by W.H. Lawrence noted, “The drive to get [Eisenhower] back in civilian clothes and installed as the President of the United States continues unabated.”²⁰ The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* labeled Eisenhower the “winner” before he had formally accepted the Republican bid.²¹ A *New York Times* article maintained that Eisenhower’s popularity guaranteed a victory on either ticket, as “party label held no factor.”²²

News media emphasized Eisenhower’s religious, war hero persona and his commitment to the security of the free world. Heralded as the man who had “spiritually

¹⁶ “Eisenhower’s Prepared Text for Fined Major Address of Campaign at Boston,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 1952.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Chernus, *Apocalypse Management*, 53.

¹⁹ “Democrats Enter Eisenhower for Oregon Presidential Race,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 1951; Marquis Childs, “Presidential Chances: Eisenhower’s Popular Appeal,” *Washington Post*, July 18, 1951.

²⁰ W. H. Lawrence, “States Rights Aide Booms Eisenhower,” *New York Times*, Jan 20, 1951.

²¹ Anthony Leviero, “G.O.P. Eisenhower Boom Now Gaining Momentum,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1951; Marshall Andrews, “Ike’s Silence is ‘Consent,’ Duff Says,” *Washington Post*, December 23, 1951.

²² Lawrence, “States Rights Aide Booms Eisenhower,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1951.

lifted Western Europe from ‘thralldom’²³ in World War II, newsprint assured its readers that he was the man for the job. The *New York Times* claimed that Eisenhower’s “armory...was an intense faith in the unity of the West, an intense faith in America that ignited in the hearts of men and women new hope and a like faith.”²⁴

Upon winning the presidential election, Eisenhower’s inaugural address echoed the rhetoric of his campaign speeches. Proclaiming his commitment to peace, Eisenhower spoke vigorously of America’s responsibility to serve as a “symbol” and protector of the free world.²⁵ America, he declared, “shall neither compromise, nor tire, nor ever cease” in its quest to promote freedom and security worldwide.²⁶ While this rhetoric helped Eisenhower win the presidency, he and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles soon acknowledged the irrationality of imposing such blatantly aggressive foreign policy. Upon discovering the magnitude of American atomic capabilities and the speculation about comparable Soviet advancements, the Eisenhower Administration recognized that rollback could quickly escalate to mutually assured destruction. Without sufficient knowledge of Soviet nuclear faculties, the Eisenhower Administration had to figure out how to change its tune while maintaining its favorable position among the American people.²⁷

²³ “Eisenhower Praised as Spiritual Leader,” *New York Times*, September 11, 1951.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed November 5, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9600>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. David M. Baehler, Evans Geakas and Ronald D. Landa (Washington D.C., 1988), Document 492.

Confirming Eisenhower's apprehension, the Soviet Union showcased its commitment to Eastern Europe when it forcefully crushed the East German uprising against the communist government of the German Democratic Republic. In June 1953, a strike by East German construction workers grew to a mass riot that continued for days. In response to the protests, Soviet military moved in with tanks and brutally suppressed the revolt.²⁸ The severity of the response in East Germany showed the Eisenhower Administration the lengths to which the Soviet Union would go to maintain its control.

Despite promises of protection and aid for those who resisted communist rule, the Eisenhower Administration sought to avoid a confrontation that might accelerate to a military conflict.²⁹ Eisenhower understood the effectiveness of covert, psychological warfare and the importance of the press in forming public opinion.³⁰ As a result, he embarked on a campaign to garner American public support for a nuclear arms buildup—purportedly for peaceful purposes—behind the guise of truth and candor. To disseminate the desired information at the appropriate time, Eisenhower recruited his friends in the news media industry. More important than the whole truth, the perception of complete openness and honesty of the President bolstered his approval ratings and ensured the support of the public regardless of his deviation from rollback.³¹

²⁸ Joseph Stalin installed the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, enforcing Sovietization, the methodical Soviet path to socialism. After Stalin's death in March of 1953, the volume of defections and emigration of East Germans had taken a toll on the East German economy. Hoping to rectify the situation, the Soviet government relaxed Stalin's intensive policies. Rather than improving morale, however, this led to violent, angry outbursts from East German citizens. See Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall*, 34.

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean*, Documents 625, 627.

³⁰ Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda," 162.

³¹ Dwight Eisenhower, "Presidential Job Approval, 1953-1960," Adapted from the Gallup Poll and compiled by Gerhard Peters, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed November 10, 2014,

Operation Candor and “Atoms for Peace”

Eisenhower enlisted the expertise and assistance of media moguls to help maintain his strong image and public approval, while endorsing the metamorphosis of his initial combative position. Accompanying his new diplomatic tone, the president needed to appear virtuous and forthright in order to ensure favor for his upcoming Atoms for Peace program. Just weeks after taking office Eisenhower formed the President’s Committee on International Information Activities under the direction of his trusted advisor on psychological warfare, Charles Douglass Jackson. In the early 1930s, Jackson had served as assistant to the president of Time Inc., becoming the managing director of Time-Life International in 1945. During World War II, he worked in the Office of Strategic Services and in 1949, he became the publisher of Fortune Magazine. In 1952, Jackson served as Eisenhower’s presidential speechwriter, and from 1953 until the end of Eisenhower’s presidency, he advised the president as his special assistant for international affairs.³² With an extensive background in both news media and government intelligence, Jackson was an ideal aide and mentor for Eisenhower’s covert propaganda campaigns.

The President’s Committee on International Information Activities, or the Jackson Committee, consisted of a variety of individuals from media executives to former Central Intelligence officials.³³ The committee concluded that psychological activity had become

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=34&sort=pop&direct=DESC&Submit=DISPLAY>.

³² John Allen Stern, *C.D. Jackson: Cold War Propagandist for Democracy and Globalism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2012), xi, 1.

³³ Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-1953* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 232.

inseparable from official policy, and declared that “every diplomatic, economic, and military action of the United States Government had a psychological aspect or implication.”³⁴ The climate of the Cold War led the Eisenhower administration to pursue a strategy of psychological infiltration in which covert propaganda infiltrated every aspect of government policy and reached the American people through seemingly nonpartisan outlets.

In addition to the official members of the Jackson Committee, Eisenhower relied on the advice of outside media moguls in his manipulation of private media. The primary objective in the President’s strategy was to keep the Cold War from turning “hot.” Therefore, his advisors urged him to utilize all media outlets available—especially private press. Both Jackson and RCA executive David Sarnoff prepared detailed plans for Eisenhower’s behind-the-scenes usage of American media to distribute specific information and propaganda to the public.³⁵ The consensus among these advisors was that private newspapers and television outlets provided the most effective, credible source of information dissemination because of their perceived autonomy.³⁶ Sarnoff’s plan, the “Program for a Political Offensive Against World Communism,” as well as the Jackson Committee’s final report, emphasized covert government influence on domestic newsprint to foster a unified “national will” of solidarity with the president against the

³⁴ U.S. President’s Committee on International Information Activities (Jackson Committee), Record of Meetings, 1953, box 12, folder 5, accession 83-9, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.

³⁵ William Jackson was the deputy director of the CIA in 1950 and Eisenhower’s U.S. national security advisor, as well as special assistant for national security affairs from 1956 to 1957.

³⁶ U.S. President’s Committee on International Information Activities (Jackson Committee), Final Report, 1953, box 12, folder 11, accession 83-9, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas.

evils of communism.³⁷ Seemingly independent, private newsprint disguised the propagandistic nature and Eisenhower's hidden involvement in news distribution.³⁸ Publicly declaring candor with the American people, the Eisenhower administration cultivated widespread support for atomic testing and arms buildup in the name of openness, honesty, and peace.

In July 1953, Jackson and Eisenhower officially launched "Operation Candor," a program in which the president would appear to confide the whole truth regarding the potential dangers of the nuclear age with the use of meticulously timed speeches and deliberate language. Less important than the actual truth, Jackson and Eisenhower understood, was the appearance of transparency. This is not to imply that Eisenhower and Jackson lied to the public about atomic energy. Rather, they thoroughly calculated when, how, and what to reveal to the American people.³⁹ An adequate amount of fear ensured support for Eisenhower's defense budget, nuclear arms buildup, and, most importantly, military restraint. Reassurance of the purported altruism of the American government guaranteed public approval for a turn toward more peaceful rhetoric and Eisenhower's future "Atoms for Peace" campaign.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., David Sarnoff, *Program for a Political Offensive Against World Communism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1955), 22.

³⁸ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda," 157-160.

³⁹ U.S. National Security Council, "Project Candor: To Inform the Public of the Realities of the 'Age of Peril'" July 22, 1953, accessed January 5, 2015, http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/atoms_for_peace/Binder17.pdf.

⁴⁰ On July 30, 1953, President Eisenhower held a meeting with Dulles and Jackson. The topic of the "Candor Project" dominated the discussion. The president detailed acceptable phrases and information that members of the administration could share in public at the appropriate time. The council also discussed the issue of timing, and decided that "Project Candor" should be initiated as soon as possible. In closing the meeting, the National Security Council instructed the Psychological Strategy Board to organize the specifics to carry out the Candor Project. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume II, Part 2, Document 97*.

Throughout the year, the press echoed the administration's official line on candor and atomic energy in articles praising the idea of Eisenhower's "Candor Project." As early as April, newsprint vehemently laid the groundwork for public support of a more peaceful, less aggressive atomic initiative. Walter Lippman of the *Washington Post* endorsed Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace project, not as an indicator of a soft, weak turn in policy, but as a brilliant strategy for avoiding the violence that historically followed ultimatums for "unconditional surrender."⁴¹ Offering a peaceful, shared route to atomic technological development, he posited, "liquidate[d] the doctrine of unconditional surrender...[which] makes wars infinitely destructive and peace virtually impossible."⁴² Lippman declared, "after you have convinced [the enemy] that you are strong...show him that you are moderate. This is what the President did."⁴³ Rather than criticizing Eisenhower's refusal to stand firm against Soviet atomic energy developments, Lippman and others commended his efforts to find peaceful means for harnessing and utilizing atomic power, as well as his endeavor to meet the Soviets halfway.⁴⁴ The press repeatedly focused on the humanitarian component of the president's candor project.⁴⁵ In order to accomplish his beneficent goals, he had chosen to initiate an "admirable, courageous"⁴⁶

⁴¹ "The President's Speech," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1953.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ David E. Lilienthal, "The Case for Candor on National Security," *New York Times*, Oct 4, 1953; Thomas P. Swift, "U.S. Turns to Use of Atom in Peace," *New York Times*, Oct 18, 1953.

⁴⁵ Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "Operation Candor," *Washington Post*, Sept 9, 1953.

⁴⁶ Stewart Alsop, "Eisenhower Pushes Operation Candor," *Washington Post*, Sept 21, 1953.

program to tell the public the truth of the destructiveness of atomic energy, in conjunction with its advantageous purposes.⁴⁷

Newsprint contrasted Eisenhower's candor campaign and his Atoms for Peace initiative with the Soviet Union's atomic policy. Reiterating the president's resolution to share the truth of nuclear energy, as well as his perceived commitment to peacetime uses of such dangerous power, newsprint further dichotomized the threatening, imperialistic image of the Soviet Union with that of the humane, democratic Western world. The press emphasized Eisenhower's amenable frankness with the American people and the world about both the dangers and benefits of atomic energy and implied that the Soviet Union had hidden atomic capabilities and potentially sinister intentions.⁴⁸ Eisenhower refocused fear away from atomic energy itself and toward the implications of the Soviet Union's possession of such power, thereby garnering support for American atomic testing.

Although domestic newsprint reported Washington's official line to American readers, Eisenhower delivered his peaceful propaganda directly to the world at the United Nations General Assembly with his famous "Atoms for Peace" speech.⁴⁹ The next step in the Candor Campaign, this global declaration placed the Eisenhower administration's plans for atomic energy development in direct opposition to those of the Soviet Union. Contrasting the descriptions of America's allegedly pacifistic intentions against the

⁴⁷ Childs, "Hope No Substitute for Atomic Policy," *Washington Post*, Aug 7, 1953; Stewart Alsop, "Experiment in Truth," *Washington Post*, September 16, 1953; Gertrude Samuels, "A Plea for 'Candor' About the Atom," *New York Times*, June 21, 1953;

⁴⁸ Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "Eisenhower Pushes Operation Candor," *Washington Post*, Sept 21, 1953; Stewart Alsop, "Experiment in Truth," *Washington Post*, September 16, 1953.

⁴⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address Before the General Assembly of the United Nations on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, New York City," December 8, 1953, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed January 6, 2015, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9774>.

language of war, death, and destruction in reference to Soviet atomic objectives, Eisenhower sought to secure worldwide support for an American policy of atomic technological expansion and arms buildup. Portraying America and the West as the moral force for good—the only side to trust with atomic capabilities—Eisenhower depicted the Soviet Union as an evil, power-hungry empire, eager to shore up atomic capabilities with malevolent intentions. Further widening the gap between the East and West, the Eisenhower administration secured the fervent support of the press and the majority of Americans who were scared to death of Soviet nuclear capabilities.⁵⁰

With the help of the press, Eisenhower employed the language of peace in reference to atomic advancements, and stressed the paramount importance of American preeminence in the development of atomic energy. As he had emphasized throughout his campaign, Eisenhower depicted America as the righteous protector of the free world. Focusing on the benefits of peacetime atomic energy, and positing America as the only world power benevolent enough to be trusted with such power, Eisenhower sought not only to secure public support for atomic testing, but also to avoid a potentially damaging Soviet propaganda campaign should Soviet scientists progress ahead of Americans in nuclear developments. Because of the obvious risks of overt belligerence in referencing such destructive technology, as well as the detrimental loss of prestige should Soviet atomic capability surpass that of the U.S., Eisenhower portrayed himself as the altruistic leader with the world's best interests at heart.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.; Chalmers M. Roberts, "Ike Moved By Need For A-Peace," *Washington Post*, December 10, 1953; "New 'Atom for Peace' Plan Sent Soviet by Eisenhower," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1954;

Newsprint championed Eisenhower's December 8 speech, simultaneously calling for a Soviet response. The press heralded the president's dynamic, progressive propositions for peace, while underscoring the widespread approval of world renowned atom scientists and Congress.⁵² Newsprint depicted the Soviet Union as the sole aggressor and charged the Soviet government with the responsibility of accepting peace negotiations. Rather than castigating the professed hardliner president for making the first move toward atomic deliberations, the press characterized Eisenhower as the honorably adept leader of the free world.⁵³ Continually promoting the tough image of the president, newsprint maintained that Eisenhower had already proven the strength of America, brilliantly looking ahead to avoid nuclear warfare. Because Eisenhower had made the first move toward atomic mediations, according to the press, the Soviet Union would be responsible and blameworthy for any threat to peace.⁵⁴

Political Metamorphosis

Despite the President's campaign rhetoric, his administration essentially continued Truman's containment policies throughout his first term.⁵⁵ Although he had secured the unfailing support of the press, Eisenhower faced interparty censure for his less-than-hardliner approach to foreign policy with the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ As a result,

"Peace Prayers Today," *New York Times*, December 13, 1953; "Atoms for Peace," *New York Times*, August 28, 1954.

⁵² "Praise in Congress," *New York Times*, December 9, 1953; "Ike's Speech Praised Generally on 'Hill,'" *Washington Post*, December 9, 1953.

⁵³ Edward F. Ryan, "Leading Atom Scientists Approve Ike's Plan as Peace Hope While Bolstering Defense," *Washington Post*, December 10, 1953.

⁵⁴ "Up to Moscow," *New York Times*, December 13, 1953; Edward T. Folliard, "Ike Awaits Red Reaction To A-Plan With Hope," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1953.

⁵⁵ Tudda, *Truth is Our Weapon*, 100.

⁵⁶ Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente*, 22.

Eisenhower, Nixon, and Dulles sought to revitalize their tough, anti-communist image in the upcoming election. Reigniting the rollback rhetoric, Eisenhower and Dulles publicly vowed American intervention in efforts to help any and all nations under Soviet domination against the will of their citizens.⁵⁷

Just as in 1953, the Administration made promises it could not keep. This time, however, Eisenhower was entrenched in the political game. By 1956 he understood the implications of an aggressive foreign policy better than he had at the start of his first term. Eisenhower likely had no intention of pursuing his espoused belligerent policies, but with the support of the press and his tenacious, hardliner reputation revived, he knew how to maintain both his image and the widespread support of the American people. His alliance with the press proved immensely fruitful in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev delivered his “Secret Speech” and set in motion social, economic, and political upheaval throughout Eastern Europe.⁵⁸

Although Khrushchev delivered his speech to a closed session of the Communist Party, word of his condemnation of Stalin and Stalinist policies quickly reached the

⁵⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Christmas Address," December 24, 1955, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9774>; U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Volume XXV, Eastern Europe*, Edward C. Keefer and Ronald D. Landa, eds. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), Document 4.

⁵⁸ On February 25, 1956, Khrushchev delivered his infamous “Secret Speech” to the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union. In this speech, he denounced Stalin’s “cult of personality” and blamed him for shortcomings in Soviet foreign policy, agriculture, and economics. Khrushchev also condemned Stalin’s mass arrests, imprisonment, and executions of innocent Communist Party members. He followed his speech with a period dubbed “the Thaw,” in which he relaxed strict censorship laws. For a detailed study of the secret speech and the Thaw, see Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009); Stephen Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev’s Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow’s Arbat* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

Eastern European satellites.⁵⁹ Eastern European Party leaders feared for the perceived legitimacy of their regimes, as they had established their leaderships under the repressive authority of the Stalinist system. Liberalization of these policies brought new freedoms in censorship and political activism. Additionally, the process of de-Stalinization allowed countries greater freedom to chart their own paths to communism. However, these moderate levels of autonomy fueled the unrest of discontented workers in a grim economic environment.⁶⁰ As a result, the people of Poland and Hungary revolted against stagnant, poor living conditions and inadequate compensation.⁶¹

The first tests of commitment to satellites' self-determination proved short-lived in Poland and Hungary. Soviet troops quickly arrived to crush the strikes and rebellions, detaining hundreds of protesters. Although the protests were, arguably, not necessarily political or ideological, but, rather, motivated by low standards of living, the Polish and Hungarian crises might have proven ideal conditions for American intervention for the cause of freedom and anti-communism.⁶² Both President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles had publically guaranteed American support of any nation resisting Communist

⁵⁹ Some of the satellite leaders were present at this session, and those who were not in attendance received copies of the text soon after Khrushchev delivered his speech. In late March, First Secretary of the Polish Party Edward Ochab leaked the content of the Secret Speech to the *New York Times*. See Carole Fink, Frank Hadler, and Tomasz Schramm, eds., *1956: European and Global Perspectives* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2006), 144-50.

⁶⁰ While the situations in Poland and Hungary are different, the majority of citizens in both countries worked in difficult circumstances for low wages. Under the authoritarian Stalinist system, citizens hid their discontent for fear of punishment for disloyalty to the Party. Once Khrushchev commenced de-Stalinization, however, liberalized censorship policies provided an outlet for expression. United in misery with the means to share their thoughts somewhat openly, discontent rose to violent rebellion.

⁶¹ For an overview of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings, see Terry Cox, ed., *Challenging Communism in Eastern Europe: 1956 and its Legacy* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁶² Regardless of whether or not ideology fueled these protests, the images of rebellion in Soviet satellites and U.S. intervention might have proven immensely effective propaganda for America and the West.

rule. When the moment arose in which those nations rebelled, however, the Eisenhower administration's promises proved little more than "empty rhetoric."⁶³

The Eisenhower administration had already privately decided against aggressive intervention in Soviet satellite states, even as it had maintained public support for it. NSC 5608, drafted in July 1956, had specifically declared that the United States would "not discourage...spontaneous manifestations of discontent and opposition to the Communist regime," and should only "covertly...assist nationalists...[and] avoid incitements to violence or action."⁶⁴ The United States likely never intended to engage in the Hungarians' struggle, despite the RFE broadcasts encouraging the uprising.⁶⁵

Even as Eisenhower reneged on aggressive rollback, the press continued its praise for his administration and commended his fortitude. In the aftermath of the Polish Uprising and the Hungarian Revolution, however, American newsprint framed the issue not as Eisenhower's alleged abandonment of Eastern Europe, but as his wisdom in deciding that the "United States should...play its hand quietly and softly."⁶⁶ The tone of the press emphasized the inevitable failures of the Soviet Union and communism in general.⁶⁷ Rather than condemning Washington for revoking its initial promises, the media reported on the failing economic conditions in Eastern Europe and what they

⁶³ Gati, *Failed Illusions*, 96.

⁶⁴ U.S. National Security Council, "NSC 5608/1: U.S. Policy toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe," July 18, 1956, accessed January 5, 2015, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB76/doc4.pdf>.

⁶⁵ For an in-depth study of the American press response to Eisenhower's lack of support in Hungary, see Gati, *Failed Illusions*, and Jordan Kirkman, "Inaction in Action: American Media and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution" (master's thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2014).

⁶⁶ Roberts, "Soviet Union Faces Grave Crisis," *Washington Post*, October 22, 1956.

⁶⁷ "The Polish Crisis: An Analysis," *Washington Post*, October 23, 1956.

deemed the Soviet Union's "gravest...crisis since [the] death of Stalin."⁶⁸ Turning the tables from Eisenhower's lack of intervention to the disastrous implications of Soviet intervention reinforced the sinister Soviet image against that of the cautious, diplomatic Eisenhower. Moreover, the press highlighted Washington's plans to offer aid to nations once they had thrown off Soviet rule. This turn absolved Eisenhower of the criticism of reversing his stance while underscoring the troubled state of the Soviet empire.⁶⁹

Throughout the remainder of 1956, the press never wavered in its overwhelming support of Eisenhower's policies. The president's connections with various media moguls ensured reports and language glorifying his triumphs and downplaying his shortcomings. Although the President disbanded the Jackson Committee in 1953, his relationships with various journalists and media executives continued until the end of his second term.⁷⁰ Even when valuable assets such as Jackson returned to their careers in private media, the power of their influence continued. Ultimately, the press helped Eisenhower to maintain his untarnished reputation throughout his evolution from the militant anti-communist to the masterful diplomat who invited the most powerful communist in the world to tour the United States.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "Ike Hints Aid to Nations Shedding Soviet Chains," *Washington Post*, October 24, 1956; Murrey Marder, "Poland and Hungary Test Satellite Rule," *Washington Post*, October 25, 1956.

⁷⁰ Parry-Giles, "'Camouflaged' Propaganda," 161.

CHAPTER II: NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV AND THE BERLIN CRISIS

Although Eisenhower had campaigned as a hardliner against communism during his first term, by his second term, he had transformed his platform to one of strength through peace. Bolstering the American economy by cutting down on conventional military spending, Eisenhower committed most of the defense funding to more inexpensive, but also more destructive nuclear weapons.¹ He believed that the gravity of atomic capabilities and the risk of mutual destruction would deter conflict while keeping costs low. From November 10, 1958, however, the threat of nuclear conflict pervaded U.S. foreign policy throughout the remainder of the decade and the Eisenhower presidency.

The Island of West Berlin

At the end of World War II, the Allied victors divided Germany into four occupied zones. The following July, they divided the capital city, Berlin, into East and West sectors. Although the original agreement stipulated that city governance would remain the equal responsibility of all four powers, with each country's leadership rotating monthly, by 1947, relations between the Eastern and the Western nations had critically deteriorated. The Soviet Union seceded from the Allied Control Council and established its own autonomous Eastern sector both in Berlin and in Germany as a whole. In May 1949, the Allies consolidated their zones and established a united Federal Republic in

¹ For a thorough examination of Eisenhower's "New Look" policy and discussion of his turn toward a more responsive defense strategy, see Williamson, *First Steps Toward Détente*, and Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look*.

West Germany. In response, the Soviet Union founded the state of East Germany, formally the German Democratic Republic, with East Berlin as its capital. Although they had established their own republic first, the Western powers rejected what they deemed a Soviet puppet state and refused to recognize the East German government in Berlin. Legally, Berlin was an occupied city, and therefore could not be under the control of Germany in any capacity.²

The problems with this arrangement surfaced quickly. Berlin's position as an occupied island in Soviet East Germany bred conflict on both sides. For the West, troops often found transportation and delivery of goods and supplies hindered by excessive Soviet stops and checkpoints.³ On the Eastern side, the mere existence of a thriving capitalist West Berlin in the midst of Soviet-controlled East Germany threatened the influence of communist ideology. Fearful of a resurgent Germany, the Soviet Union devoted its efforts to decimating any chance of industrial or economic growth in their zone. They destroyed railways and allotted the Germans under their control only limited goods. To offset enormous war costs on the Eastern Front, the Soviet Union extracted reparations from East Germany, using its factories and industrial resources for reconstruction of ravaged war zones. These drastic measures led to bleak East German living conditions and contributed to daily massive migration of East Germans to West Berlin.⁴ For almost a decade the friction and discord within this arrangement continued

² Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake, eds., *Berlin: Divided City, 1945-1989* (New York: Berghahn Books; 2010), 34, 56.

³ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis, 1958-1959*, John P. Glennon and Charles S. Sampson, eds. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), Document 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Document 264.

until it erupted in a crisis that sharply divided the East and West, not only in Germany, but throughout the world.

“To March Against the East Would Mean Marching to Death for West Germany”⁵

On November 10, 1958, amid friendship meetings and festivities with Polish leader Wladyslaw Gomulka, Premier Khrushchev delivered a harrowing speech at the Sports Palace in Moscow. Alarmed by West Germany’s flourishing economy and fearful of the prospects for its rearmament, Khrushchev declared that the Western powers had relinquished their legal occupational rights in Berlin. He proclaimed that, in rearming West Germany, the Allies had violated the stipulations of the postwar Potsdam Agreement. Consequently, he insisted that the Western occupying powers leave Berlin, at which time he declared that he, too, would evacuate all Soviet troops and government institutions in the city. The West, he asserted, could then deal with the East German government directly should it desire access to Berlin. Taking his pronouncement even further, just two weeks after his November speech, Khrushchev introduced a time table of six months to demilitarize Berlin and deem it a free city for both Germanys to handle on their own.⁶

Washington analyzed the situation behind closed doors. The Eisenhower administration speculated that Khrushchev’s strategy included two monumental components. First and most importantly, they believed, Khrushchev sought to achieve

⁵ Address by Premier Khrushchev at a Soviet-Polish meeting, November 10, 1958: reprinted in *Documents on Germany, 1944-1959: Background Documents on Germany, 1944-1959, and a Chronology of Political Developments Affecting Berlin, 1945-1956* (Washington, DC: General Printing Office, 1959), 309.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 24.

Western recognition of the East German government by handing the West an ultimatum. Second, they presumed that Khrushchev intended to expose the fissures within the Western alliance and dismantle its unified front.⁷ Khrushchev understood the Western allies' varying degrees of commitment to Berlin and the West German alliance. Britain, for instance, did not share the same levels of investment, dedication, or obligation to the West Germans that America did.⁸ The Eisenhower administration suspected that with these demands, Khrushchev hoped to initiate a split in the Western alliance that might lead to East German recognition and Western troop evacuations.

Eisenhower and Dulles committed to maintaining Western allied unity against the Soviet Union, while continuing their hard line rhetoric to the American public. Neither man wanted armed or nuclear conflict over Berlin, and both were prepared to negotiate to avoid disaster.⁹ Preserving a unified Western front alongside a strong, anticommunist image, the Eisenhower administration avoided accusations of having yielded to Khrushchev's time table. Enlisting American newsprint in their efforts to exhibit an unyielding iron will, Eisenhower and Dulles initiated clandestine negotiations to ameliorate the situation diplomatically.¹⁰

During the months following Khrushchev's speech, Washington officials made various recommendations on how to proceed with Germany and the tumultuous Berlin situation. The overarching theme in all proposals, conferences, and telegrams pressed for a temperate approach in addressing the Berlin question and Khrushchev's ultimatum.

⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁸ Ibid., Document 131.

⁹ Ibid., Documents 73, 225.

¹⁰ Ibid., Document 183.

While Washington clearly recognized the potential danger for serious conflict with the Soviet Union and of Khrushchev's possible implementation of his Berlin threats, government officials overwhelmingly stressed the importance of portraying a firm reaction, while "avoiding actions which might over-dramatize the...situation."¹¹ Although the threat of military conflict loomed in the background of discussions regarding the Soviet zone and Berlin, American officials, for the most part, agreed that Khrushchev's November stunt was, more than anything, an effort to provoke a "war of nerves" aimed at securing a four-power summit meeting.¹²

On November 15, 1958, the Soviet troops stationed at Berlin checkpoints showcased their first test of Western firmness on the Berlin position. Alleging that the Americans had refused inspection, the Soviet troops detained three covered American convoy trucks and halting American soldiers' access through the checkpoints.¹³ Despite the blatant harassment, the Eisenhower administration opted for a soft approach to this breach of the occupied agreement.¹⁴ This test of Western resolve complicated the American determination to showcase a strong stance in Berlin. Nonetheless, Washington officials agreed not to fuel the situation or create an atmosphere of panic.¹⁵ Instead, the Eisenhower administration sought to pacify the U.S.S.R. and keep peaceful negotiations moving forward while preserving the global perception of a strong Western front.

¹¹ Ibid., Document 32.

¹² Ibid., Documents 31-34, 40.

¹³ Ibid., 38, 41.

¹⁴ Ibid., Document 38, 41, 44.

¹⁵ Ibid., Document 41.

Throughout November, Eisenhower's most trusted officials put forth various recommendations on how to proceed in Berlin. American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson firmly proposed a Western bluff. Rather than negotiate with GDR officials in any capacity, he advocated a secret agreement in which the United States, Britain, and France would jointly relay the West's willingness to risk military conflict over Berlin should Khrushchev enforce the Berlin ultimatum. Privately, the Western powers would agree to conduct high level negotiations should the Soviet officials call their bluff. Thompson assumed, however, that Khrushchev would retract his ultimatum at any serious display of brinkmanship from the West.¹⁶

In order to continue progress in U.S.-Soviet communications and to avoid a second Berlin blockade, Dulles advocated altering the identification of GDR officials. Navigating the appearance of caving to Soviet threats while working toward a peaceful solution in Germany, he suggested that, rather than adamantly refuse to deal with GDR officials in any capacity, Western troops at Berlin checkpoints refer to GDR representatives as agents of the Soviet Union. Therefore, should Khrushchev withdraw Soviet troops, Western powers could still deal directly with GDR authorities without formally recognizing the GDR government, claiming that the "Soviets remained responsible."¹⁷

Finally, John J. McCloy and General Lucius D. Clay proposed creating a self-imposed blockade and airlift to show Western dedication to Berlin. Rather than proceed on Soviet terms, the U.S., Britain, and France should put forward their own

¹⁶ Ibid., Document 56.

¹⁷ Ibid., Document 45.

counterproposals and express their intent to support German reunification as the ultimate end goal. In the meantime, they suggested that Eisenhower create serious contingency plans for war with the Soviet Union. This plan involved risking war over maintaining the Western position in Berlin.¹⁸

Rejecting propositions advocating military bluffs and blockades, Eisenhower opted, instead, for a more direct, peaceable approach. Although privately Eisenhower expressed his opinion of the American military position in Berlin as “wholly illogical,” he also acknowledged that the commitment nonetheless existed. The Americans, British, and French had a responsibility to Berlin, and “had to stand firm.”¹⁹ In a private conference with his closest officials Eisenhower declared that, in the event of a Soviet withdrawal from Berlin, merely identifying GDR officials as Soviet agents would negatively affect the morale of the West Germans relying on American loyalty and support. Therefore, he presented a more nuanced course of action. First, he proposed a joint Western message to the Soviets firmly stating that the West, in no capacity, desired war. After this peaceful foundation, Eisenhower insisted the Western powers assert and defend their rights to stay in Berlin. This declaration, expressed in peaceful, friendly terms, should “emphasize the rights of the two million people of West Berlin rather than the military rights of the occupying powers.” Finally, at the direction of Livingston Merchant, Eisenhower decided to “propose a talk on the status of all of Germany,” as an alternative to Khrushchev’s “unilateral action” on Berlin. At the end of this meeting, the president hinted at “making a generous offer to the Soviets, so generous that the Soviets

¹⁸ Ibid., Document 94.

¹⁹ Ibid., Document 47.

and the world would recognize it as such.”²⁰ Without divulging specifics of this offer, Eisenhower’s tone conveyed his urgent willingness to ameliorate hostilities before the Berlin situation escalated.

In early December, Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey’s trip to the Soviet Union launched the language of informal negotiation in Washington and in American newsprint. The senator conducted hours of talks with Khrushchev. Briefing Eisenhower on the details of their dialogue, Humphrey assessed Khrushchev as the most “‘open’ character yet to rule the USSR,” estimating that despite his ultimatum, the Premier had no real desire for war.²¹ As a result of Humphrey’s fruitful discussions with the Premier, Washington and the press simultaneously circulated terms such as, “informal negotiation,” and “a new approach to the Cold War,” subtly preparing the American people for a momentous overture in U.S.-Soviet relations.²²

“Continuing War by Other Means”: The Press and the Berlin Crisis²³

American press coverage of the Berlin Crisis diligently advocated for a new approach to the Cold War. The same journalists who had promoted Eisenhower’s hardline campaign in 1950 now pushed for an about-face in foreign policy. Defending Washington’s and the West’s perseverance in Berlin and supporting the steadfast Western commitment to its West German ally, the papers invariably promoted a turn

²⁰ Ibid., Document 47.

²¹ Ibid., Document 89.

²² “Humphrey at Kremlin,” *New York Times*, December 2, 1958; “What Khrushchev Wants,” *Time*, December 12, 1958, 14; “Candidate in Orbit,” *Time*, December 15, 1958, 14; “Mikoyan and the New Informal Diplomacy,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1959. The Eisenhower administration had discussed extending an invitation to Khrushchev in late 1958, months before the final decision in the summer of 1959. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 85.

²³ C.L. Sulzberger, “Continuing War by Other Means,” *New York Times*, November 17, 1958.

away from the rhetoric of military force, toward a message of strength through peace and negotiations. Press coverage of Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum and the Eisenhower administration's response paved the way for the American public approval of a more diplomatic Cold War position. Rather than anti-communist rhetoric or charged language of defense against Soviet aggression, newsprint supported the President's commitment to peaceful negotiations, while maintaining his staunch reputation. America's leading newspapers sought to systematically transform public opinion and create an atmosphere conducive to diplomacy that would emanate strength through peace rather than military engagement.

President Eisenhower's close relationship with C.D. Jackson and other influential media moguls allowed him to disseminate a three-pronged message to the American people. First, newsprint consistently implied that the people of East Germany were not enemies of the West. Highlighting the constant East German migrations to West Berlin, the press portrayed the East Germans as Soviet captives, desperate for reunification with the Western brothers.²⁴ Therefore, should East German officials replace Soviet troops at checkpoints, military violence against them would prove both counterproductive and unethical.²⁵ Secondly, despite Khrushchev's accusations, the press assured Americans that the Western powers had not violated any agreements. Rather, they exercised a legal right to occupy Berlin, and the people of Berlin favored the presence and protection of

²⁴ "Real Schräg," *Time*, December 8, 1958, 50; "The Cancer of Freedom," *Time*, December 8, 1958, 23; "Berlin: A Symbol," *New York Times*, November 23, 1958; Flora Lewis, "West Berlin: Mood in the City," *New York Times*, November 30, 1958; "The Islanders," *Time*, May 25, 1959, 25.

²⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 27.

Western troops.²⁶ Thus, for the sake of both East and West Germany, the Western powers could not abandon Berlin. Finally, American newsprint confidently dismissed the possibility of a war over Berlin. Dispelling fears of Khrushchev's brinkmanship, the press deemed his ultimatum a tenuous bluff.²⁷ Endorsing the Eisenhower-approved position on Berlin and Khrushchev, journalists' and columnists' carefully crafted language and tone fostered American support for a diplomatic shift in foreign policy.

Following closely behind diplomatic developments, American newsprint echoed the government-approved, pro-West German stance. Facing threats barely short of provoking war, the press emphasized U.S. support of East Germany as well. Articles often referenced the Germans without West or East distinction, avoiding oppositional language and adversarial stigmas. The *New York Times* quoted West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer: "All Germans must stand united...and form a united front in the face of a Soviet threat."²⁸ Additionally, journalists reported on the popularity of American rock and roll throughout Germany. Referencing specific artists such as Elvis Presley, the press emphasized common ground between Americans and Germans. Interviewing teenagers in Munich, a *Time* article quoted seventeen-year-old German Hanna Wurmser on American music: "Those are our voices...Presley and Wild Bill Haley. It gets you; it lifts you."²⁹ Abandoning the language of East and West, the press sought to show

²⁶ Ibid., Document 67, 68, 83.; "The Course of the Cold War," *Time*, January 5, 1959, 24; Sydney Gruson, "West Berliners Calm Despite New Threats," *New York Times*, November 16, 1958; Drew Middleton, "West Hears of New Unrest Stirring in East Germany," *New York Times*, December 20, 1958.

²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 137; Gruson, "Easing Tension Over Berlin Seen," *New York Times*, November 17, 1958; "No, No, No," *Time*, January 12, 1959, 30; "Humphrey Doubts War Will Start Over Berlin," *New York Times*, December 15, 1958.

²⁸ Gruson, "Adenauer Urges West Stand Firm," *New York Times*, December 3, 1958.

²⁹ "Real Schräg," *Time*, December 8, 1958, 50.

solidarity with the Germans as a whole, who only wanted reunification and freedom—everything that the United States supported.

Articles charted the daily growing number of East Germans fleeing to West Berlin as a haven for freedom. Stressing the fact that East Germans did not, in fact, want to be in East Germany, the press conveyed an aura of sympathy for a people forced into an unwanted situation with a low living standard. A *New York Times* article described East Germans as “slaves,” and declared that the West “can’t leave them to the mercy of the Russians.”³⁰ Flora Lewis of the *Washington Post* reported on the increasing flood of East German intellectuals to West Germany, portraying the West as a beacon of freedom from dismal, Soviet-imposed living conditions.³¹ The Eisenhower administration, the press maintained, had no intention of provoking or entering into a Soviet-provoked conflict over Berlin.³² The message of solidarity with the Germans was an important one. Washington recruited its Operation Candor allies to help spread this stance, and to guarantee aversion to even limited military conflict with East German officials in the event that Khrushchev evacuated Soviet troops.³³

In response to Khrushchev’s insistence that the Western powers had given up their legal rights to remain in Berlin, the press reiterated the legal basis for Western occupation in Berlin, as well as the need for a firm stand on behalf of all Berliners.³⁴ In conjunction, newsprint stressed that, in contrast to East Germans, miserable in their

³⁰ “Berlin: A Symbol,” *New York Times*, November 23, 1958.

³¹ Lewis, “‘Quality’ is Fleeing East Germany,” *Washington Post*, November 23, 1958.

³² E.W. Kenworthy, “Washington Calm on German Issue,” *New York Times*, November 12, 1958; “The Islanders,” *Time*, May 25, 1959, 26; Roberts, “‘Sit Tight’ Policy Seen on Berlin,” *Washington Post*, November 23, 1958.

³³ “Pressure at Berlin,” *Time*, November 24, 1958, 24.

³⁴ Stewart Hensley, “U.S. Defends Berlin Rights,” *Washington Post*, November 14, 1958.

communist confinement, West Germans overwhelmingly supported Western presence in the city. Offering both East and West German perspectives, Flora Lewis reported, “West Berlin’s own attitude is influenced by [East German] refugees. For one thing they are proof...that life is not lovely...in East Germany.” She continued, “[East German refugees] bring words of gratitude to West Berlin for existing, for keeping open to them a porthole to the West.” In conclusion, she quoted an East German refugee: ““Everyone in East Germany is praying that the Allies will stay.””³⁵ Several articles maintained that American presence in West Berlin boosted morale and made the local population feel safe, physically, politically, and economically. *New York Times* journalist Sydney Gruson quoted one confident Berliner who declared, ““So long as Americans stay here we have nothing to worry about.””³⁶ Neither military engagement with East German troops nor abandonment of Berlin, the press insisted, were viable options. Either would prove detrimental to reunification efforts, as well as to the hopes of the East Germans looking to West Berlin as a symbol of freedom.

Overall, the press became an invaluable asset in securing American aversion to military conflict with East Germany should Soviet troops evacuate. These points also ensured American support for the decision to remain in Berlin. Identifying the Germans as Westerners and underscoring the weight of Berlin’s dependence upon Western assistance placed the American people in rhetorical solidarity with the Germans, whether Khrushchev acted on his six month ultimatum or not. The press helped to absolve

³⁵ Lewis, “West Berlin: Mood in the City: Citizens Know They Play a Key Role,” *Washington Post*, November 30, 1958.

³⁶ Gruson, “West Berliners Calm Despite New Threats,” *New York Times*, November 16, 1958.

Eisenhower from military conflict on the front end, while guaranteeing public approval for the American presence in Berlin.

Further, the press maintained the position that Americans had no reason to fear Khrushchev's intentions in Berlin. Numerous articles highlighted evidence that Khrushchev did not want war over Berlin, and that the Eisenhower administration had clearly expressed its doubt that Khrushchev would risk mutually assured destruction. A *New York Times* article in December 1958 called a military engagement "a grim prospect... because it is widely assumed Moscow is reluctant to risk such holocaust."³⁷ Along the same line, Chalmers Roberts of the *Washington Post* argued that, despite speculations that Khrushchev was "a reckless man...willing to take a gamble which could lead to a catastrophic war...the record hardly proves it."³⁸ Various journalists and columnists speculated that Khrushchev intended merely to test the resolve of the Western alliance, simultaneously "striving for a foreign policy success to divert attention from domestic difficulties."³⁹ In downplaying the severity of Khrushchev's ultimatum, the press implied that America and the West held the upper hand in the Berlin Crisis, thus allaying public expectations for a military intervention.

In order to cement the idea of American dominance, newsprint highlighted the various spheres in which the Soviets lagged behind the United States. As if to remind the American people that the Soviets were far from surpassing America in any capacity, newsprint consistently pointed to instances in which Khrushchev's promises of higher

³⁷ "A Fresh Look at the Berlin Problem," *New York Times*, December 10, 1958.

³⁸ Roberts, "'Sit Tight' Policy on Berlin," *Washington Post*, November 23, 1958.

³⁹ Gruson, "Adenauer Urges West Stand Firm," *New York Times*, December 3, 1958.

living standards fell short of expectations. A November 1958 *New York Times* article described Soviet goods such as shoes and clothing as “shoddy,” and “of poor quality,” despite their expensive costs.⁴⁰ In response to Khrushchev’s prediction that Soviet Union would outpace the U.S. in industrial growth by 1965, Harry Schwartz of the *New York Times* asserted that “the free world’s lead is so large that it is doubtful that Communist industrial growth in the next seven years can wipe out the existing advantage.”⁴¹ Not only did these articles dispel fears of rapid Soviet advancement, they also employed a similar underlying theme: if Khrushchev continuously exaggerated the Soviet Union’s economic ability and military strength, why would he not exaggerate intentions in foreign policy?⁴² Quoting Khrushchev on various policy issues, a February 1959 article in *Time* highlighted Khrushchev’s penchant for bold claims. Citing his characterization of Western leaders as “dealers in blood, merchants of death,” and his statement, “We shall win...but we’ll let you live,” the article conveyed the often outrageous tone of Khrushchev’s rhetoric. Revealing the shortcomings in Soviet economic progress despite overstated claims and promises, American newsprint reassured the people that exaggerations with regard to Berlin were not only possible, but highly likely.⁴³

In spite of Khrushchev’s audacious rhetoric, newsprint frequently planted subtle support for Western negotiation. Championing the President’s firm resolution after Khrushchev’s November speech, by the end of 1958 journalists en masse called for a turn

⁴⁰ “More Soviet Promises,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1958.

⁴¹ Harry Schwartz, “Red Bloc’s Goal Called Inflated,” *New York Times*, November 17, 1958.

⁴² Adlai Stevenson, “Stevenson Notes Soviet Contrasts,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1959; “Soviet Lags Behind U.S.,” *Washington Post*, November 14, 1958; “Communism on the Defensive,” *Time*, February 9, 1959, 21.

⁴³ Khrushchev had a habit of bold claims throughout his leadership. See Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 119, 149.

toward compromise.⁴⁴ Eisenhower's steadfast stance in the face of Khrushchev's demands, they maintained, had worked thus far. The premier had extended his deadline and shown willingness, even eagerness, to talk. Journalists conveyed the message that the West must now be prepared to open lines of communication. As one *Time* article put it: "the West must now show itself willing to talk....Pressure must work both ways."⁴⁵ A December 1958 *New York Times* article maintained that, while there is "no reason...to be intimidated by the Soviet ultimatum," for the best interests of Germany, "the West will have to show that it is exhausting every reasonable possibility for agreement."⁴⁶ Following closely behind Washington's metamorphosis in foreign policy, newsprint endorsed a new line on Cold War diplomacy, simultaneously shielding Eisenhower from claims of inconsistency or hypocrisy.

An Experiment in Informal Negotiations: Mikoyan in America⁴⁷

As the press circulated the language of a new approach to Cold War foreign policy, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a note that ultimately advanced Washington's diplomatic strategy. In December 1958, First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan had requested a diplomatic visa for a trip to the United States to "explore possibilities of increasing trade with U.S. and...to take [America's] temperature on [the] Berlin question."⁴⁸ As the Eisenhower administration's hidden hand had repeatedly pushed for

⁴⁴ "What Khrushchev Wants," *Time*, December 15, 1958, 14; "Open Door," *Time*, December 29, 1958, 13; "The Course of the Cold War," *Time*, January 5, 1959, 25.

⁴⁵ "The Rise or Rapacki Fever," *Time*, December 15, 1958, 23.

⁴⁶ "Talking on Germany," *New York Times*, December 6, 1958.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part I, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Ronald D. Landa, James E. Miller, eds. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), Document 59.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

public support of informal negotiations in the press, Mikoyan's request arrived at the perfect moment.

Unsurprisingly, the press reported on Mikoyan's upcoming visit with hopeful and optimistic undertones. Covering Washington's expectations for informal talks on Berlin and friendly correspondence between American and Soviet officials in preparation for the visit, the press staunchly endorsed this change in diplomatic tides.⁴⁹ While maintaining a realistic tone, newsprint praised the Eisenhower administration's willingness to welcome Mikoyan and to take the "opportunity for frank discussion" to ease international tensions.⁵⁰ A December 1958 *Washington Post* article proclaimed: "The Administration has used good judgment in welcoming the visit to this country by...Mikoyan."⁵¹ Rather than a sign of weakness, or even a cause for anxiety, the press portrayed Mikoyan's warm welcome as a masterfully diplomatic move intended to promote fruitful negotiations between the two world powers.⁵²

As the new year began, the media praised the Eisenhower administration's successes in staving off military conflict after Khrushchev's November speech, while holding strong in support of West Berlin against Soviet intimidation. A January *Time* article commended the Eisenhower administration's Cold War accomplishments the previous year. Eisenhower had "deterred big war and two limited wars, kept Communism locked up inside its empire, [and] successfully countered Nikita Khrushchev's year-long

⁴⁹ "Russia Says Mikoyan Wants to Visit D.C.," *Washington Post*, December 18, 1958.

⁵⁰ "Mr. Mikoyan's Visit," *Washington Post*, December 19, 1958.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² "Greeting Mr. Mikoyan," *Washington Post*, January 4, 1959; Dana Adams Schmidt, "Sudden Visa Bid Granted: Washington Readily Agrees to Visit by No. 2 Soviet Leader," *New York Times*, December 19, 1958. Robert Doty, "NATO's Ministers United On Berlin: Mikoyan Visit Hailed," *New York Times*, December 19, 1958.

campaign to bluff, panic, . . . and divide allies.”⁵³ In addition to laudatory remarks, however, the press called for an even more dynamic Cold War strategy.⁵⁴ *Time* insisted that “the U.S. must move ahead—in stepped-up people-to people exchanges; . . . in meeting and debating with Communists . . . in world labor unions . . . ; in finding better ways of bolstering the cause of freedom behind the Iron Curtain.”⁵⁵ Stressing the importance and benefits of meetings with Soviet leaders, as well as student and specialist exchanges between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the press facilitated American support for continued momentum in Cold War diplomacy.

Eisenhower, Dulles, Ambassador Thompson, and Soviet Ambassador Mikhail Menshikov all supported the proposal for Mikoyan’s visit. Although the officially stated purpose of the trip was to initiate a dialogue on trade between America and the Soviet Union, the Eisenhower administration speculated that the true objective would be to gauge the American mood surrounding not only the Berlin situation, but international relations as a whole. Finalizing Mikoyan’s itinerary, security precautions, and meetings with top American officials, acting Secretary of State Christian Herter and Under Secretary of State Robert Murphy initiated the experimental negotiations.⁵⁶

⁵³ “The Course of the Cold War,” *Time*, January 5, 1959, 25.

⁵⁴ Roberts, “West Asks Parley on Germany,” *Washington Post*, January 1, 1959; Childs, “Behind Moscow’s Bluster on Berlin,” *Washington Post*, January 2, 1959; “Ike Renews Pledge to West Berlin,” *Washington Post*, December 1, 1958; See Brady, *Eisenhower and Adenauer* for a discussion of how the relationship between Eisenhower and Adenauer perpetuated Cold War conflict. Rather than seeking an end to the Cold War, Williamson argues that Eisenhower’s loyalty to Adenauer caused him to put the alliance with West Germany above any meaningful negotiations with the Soviet Union.

⁵⁵ “The Course of the Cold War,” *Time*, January 5, 1959, 25.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Document 59.

Content of Mikoyan's discussions with Eisenhower, Dulles, and other officials circulated in the press, along with indirect references to top level meetings between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.⁵⁷ Without divulging specifics of Mikoyan's meetings, the press revealed enough to place a prospective U.S.-Soviet Summit in American minds. William J. Jordan of the *New York Times* reported: "Mr. Mikoyan did not specifically call for a meeting between President Eisenhower and Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev...but his listeners had no doubt that that was in his mind."⁵⁸ A February *Time* article stated: "Dulles signaled to the Kremlin that he was ready to do the diplomatic dance."⁵⁹

Simultaneously, the Eisenhower administration worked outside the public eye to secure a peaceful settlement on the German question, agreeable to both Moscow and Washington. On January 5, 1959, Mikoyan met with Dulles, Menshikov, Thompson, and others in Washington. They considered a possible peace treaty between East and West Germany to take effect without any verdict on reunification. Mikoyan, however, upheld the premier's desire for gradual but complete removal of foreign troops and the creation of Berlin as a demilitarized city, divorced from any outside influence. He denied that Khrushchev's speech threatened the Western powers, and asked instead for ongoing negotiations. In turn, Dulles reinforced the Western right to continue its occupation of Berlin, but assured Mikoyan that the United States did not want war. The meeting ended

⁵⁷ William J. Jordan, "Mikoyan Suggests Top-Level Parley of U.S. and Soviet," *New York Times*, January 6, 1959.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "After Mikoyan," *Time*, February 9, 1959, 21.

with no change in mutual suspicion, but the diplomats had begun the process of negotiation and end of ultimatums in the Berlin Crisis.⁶⁰

Eisenhower's private conference with Mikoyan revealed a mutual commitment to diffuse the German situation and to alleviate the animosity between their respective nations. The two men stressed the importance of peaceful relations as well as the common understanding and coexistence of two opposing governments and ways of life. Eisenhower declared that the U.S. had "no desire for violent action with respect to East Germany," and Mikoyan expressed his support for a peace treaty that might lead to a real solution involving reunification. Mikoyan also detailed the Soviet desire for peaceful relations with West Germany, and assured the president that Khrushchev had not intended to threaten the West in his speech the previous year. Although Mikoyan opposed the idea of free elections in East Germany, he did convey a genuine desire for "a better climate and more mutual trust" between the Soviets and the West in order to tackle disagreements in Germany and in general.⁶¹

Upon Mikoyan's return to the Soviet Union, press coverage accentuated the positive impacts of the visit, celebrating the breakthrough in communication between the East and West. A *New York Times* article quoted Mikoyan: "Capitalists cannot approve communism. Communists cannot approve capitalism. But...one has to live peacefully with one's neighbor and tolerate him." The article continued, highlighting Mikoyan's greater understanding of America as a result of his trip: "He appeared to be convinced

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 121.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 137.

that there was no rampaging war party in the United States and that...Americans were peacefully inclined.”⁶² Additionally, the press preserved Eisenhower’s stalwart image alongside his conciliatory shift. Chalmers Roberts of the *Washington Post* reported: “President Eisenhower...said he felt sure...Mikoyan knows now that the United States is ready to ‘conciliate’ East-West differences, but that ‘it simply won’t be pushed around’ by the Communist world.”⁶³ The tone of the press implied that despite the change in diplomatic tides, Eisenhower’s fortitude endured.

In spite of such tenacious language in the press, private meetings between American and German diplomats affirmed American commitment to an amicable solution on the German situation. In a meeting with various German and American diplomats, Livingston Merchant called for a conference regarding the Berlin Crisis. Cautious to avoid any indication of retreat, he advised against removing Western troops from Berlin at the belligerence of the Soviet government. However, he proposed, “vigorous effort to negotiate [was] essential to show that we were ready to exhaust all possibilities before we [were] confronted with a very serious situation.”⁶⁴ Even as Adenauer desperately wanted Western military intervention and display of military force, American diplomats rejected this proposal in favor of a peaceable solution.⁶⁵

Dulles’s trip to Europe in February of 1959, and his meetings with European leaders and ambassadors, confirmed NATO’s allied agreement on the significance of

⁶² Harrison Salisbury, “Mikoyan Voices Belief his Visit Promoted Peace,” *New York Times*, January 21, 1959.

⁶³ Roberts, “Ike ‘Sure’ Reds Know U.S. Stand: Cites Readiness to Conciliate But ‘Won’t Be Pushed,’” *Washington Post*, January 22, 1959.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 129.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Document 128.

upholding Western claims in Berlin. Washington's perception that Khrushchev intended to expose fissures in the Western alliance necessitated joint discussions between the three powers. With various conferences, both Dulles and Merchant hoped to reinforce common ground and maintain a united approach to the German situation. On February 16, 1959, various European ambassadors met with Merchant in Washington and discussed a potential meeting of foreign ministers with the Soviet leaders.⁶⁶ In a telegram to the state department three days later, Thompson recommended a summit conference in the event that Khrushchev rejected the potential Foreign Ministers' meeting. Because he recognized the futility of convincing the Soviet government to accept free elections in a unified Germany, Thompson suggested a compromise of an interim period between three and five years, in which East Germany could decide its own economic status after unification. With such a compromise, Thompson aimed to further relax the tension surrounding the question of reunification and coerce a modicum of support from the Soviet Union. In efforts to ease Khrushchev's fears of a resurgent, rearmed Germany he also proposed reducing Western troops, as well as atomic disarmament in Germany. Finally, Thompson encouraged unwavering Allied solidarity in response to the Soviet ultimatum, accompanied by a willingness to compromise and avoid military engagement.⁶⁷

The press chose to read the flexible turn in Eisenhower's foreign policy as one of strong leadership and brilliant strategy, while viewing the Soviet shift from hardliner

⁶⁶ Ibid., Document 175.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Document 180.

language to moderate tones as backpedaling.⁶⁸ Articles solely credited Eisenhower and the Western allies with progress in negotiations. Rather than a capitulation to Soviet demands, newsprint heralded the West's proposal to conduct high-level talks shortly before Khrushchev's deadline as an effort to offer a way out of the Berlin Crisis.⁶⁹ Thus, the media presented Washington and its NATO allies as the side with the upper hand, as well as the foresight to end the conflict before it escalated to disaster.⁷⁰ Similarly, after Mikoyan's visit to the U.S., journalists speculated about a possible foreign ministers conference. Articles attributed this development to Eisenhower's resilience against communism and diplomatic sensibility in his communications with Mikoyan. Conversely, the press used Mikoyan's attempt to dismiss threatening perceptions of Khrushchev's November speech as evidence of a Soviet retreat from conflict with the West.

Alongside the picture of a strong NATO and Washington, American newsprint painted a picture of a wrathful and volatile Khrushchev, even as it emphasized the weaknesses and decline of communism in other parts of the world.⁷¹ A March article in *Time* portrayed Khrushchev as a "menacing" tyrant who "raised and lowered the cold war temperature at will." It speculated: "How much of this constant shifting of attitudes was

⁶⁸ Ibid., Document 205. In March 1959, Eisenhower held a conference with key members of his administration. Discussions of carefully balancing pressure with compromise reveal the administration's anxieties surrounding military conflict over Berlin.

⁶⁹ "After Mikoyan," *Time*, February 2, 1959, 25.

⁷⁰ "Out of the Corner?" *Time*, January 5 1959, 22; "After Mikoyan," *Time*, February 2, 1959, 25; Walter Lippmann, "On Flexibility," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1959; Roberts, "West Ready to Broaden Soviet Talks," *Washington Post*, February 12, 1959; "Hot and Cold," *Washington Post*, March 3, 1959.

⁷¹ "Communism on the Defensive," *Time*, February 9, 1959, 21; "Khrushchev Hits Red Tape and Urges Technical Speedup to Match U.S.," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1959.

deliberate, how much impulsive, not even Khrushchev himself...knows.”⁷² The article continued, quoting Khrushchev on the West: ““Elbow us and we will break your elbow.””⁷³ Another *Time* piece claimed that “Russia is not fundamentally interested in a ‘relaxation of tensions’...or any other ingenious schemes for an overall settlement of the German problem.”⁷⁴ The press continuously placed upon Khrushchev the sole responsibility for heightened Cold War antagonism and underscored his tendency to blame the West in his own defense. Matched against Eisenhower, the media showcased Khrushchev as the monstrous villain, opposite the tenacious, yet diplomatic president.⁷⁵

Despite the press depiction of a dominant NATO alliance, Khrushchev held considerable leverage over Western leaders on the German question. During a Ministerial meeting on April 2, Herter, United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd, and French Minister of Foreign Affairs Maurice Couve de Murville discussed their shared belief that Khrushchev did not want war over Berlin, but that “Soviet leaders have more to lose from relaxation of tension than [the] West....” Lloyd specifically emphasized the need to evade ““a situation of choice between war and a resounding diplomatic defeat.”” All agreed that lines of communication must remain open. After the conference of foreign ministers in May, during which the ministers sensed little progress could be made without Khrushchev in attendance, Lloyd specifically supported a Four Power summit meeting to

⁷² “We Are In No Hurry,” *Time*, March 16, 1959, 27.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ “The Message,” *Time*, March 9, 1959, 21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; “We Are In No Hurry,” *Time*, March 16, 1959, 27; “Measure for Measure,” *Time*, March 16, 1959, 26; Roscoe Drummond, “What Does Mr. K. Want?” *Washington Post*, March 1, 1959; and “Khrushchev’s Words...An Opportunity to Test Him,” *Washington Post*, March 2, 1959.

continue negotiations.⁷⁶ Avoiding military conflict while insuring sustained discussions seemed the best option to keep the Cold War from turning hot over Berlin.

In his 2003 biography of Khrushchev, Taubman echoes Thompson's assertions regarding Khrushchev's intentions in Berlin. Taubman maintains that Khrushchev's incessant insecurity about his lack of education and culture fostered his intense need for recognition as a legitimate world leader. His belligerent, overconfident rhetoric masked a deep sense of self-doubt and his desire for validation from his own people, as well as his powerful enemies. Taubman reveals that for years Khrushchev had hinted quite blatantly at his wish for an invitation to the United States. He vied for a trip to America and high level negotiations with President Eisenhower, even through ultimatums and brinkmanship, in efforts to reinforce the legitimacy of his position as the leader of a dominant world power.⁷⁷ In August 1959 Khrushchev's wish came true. The following month he became the first leader of the Soviet Union ever to visit the United States, where, to his delight, he received round-the-clock media coverage and the public acknowledgment he wanted all along.

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 252.

⁷⁷ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 365.

CHAPTER III: THE COLD WAR ROADSHOW

“The vital lesson is this: to vacillate, to appease, to placate is only to invite war—vaster war—bloodier war. In the words of the late Senator Vandenberg, appeasement is not the road to peace, it is only surrender on the installment plan. I will always reject appeasement. And that is my...pledge to you.”¹

Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 24, 1952

“All of this exercise of negotiating and dealing with the Soviets has as its basic purpose the reduction of tension. We have been, the free world has been, trying to bring that about for a good many years. ... I will say merely this: if, assuming that we have an atmosphere that permits periodic negotiation, gives some hope of its beneficial effects for our country and for the free world, well, certainly I would never decline to go along in that kind of an effort.”²

Dwight D. Eisenhower, March 25, 1959

The preceding quotes display the sharp about-face in Eisenhower’s foreign policy rhetoric from his initial campaign to his second term. Throughout his presidency, the press helped Eisenhower redefine not only acceptable policy goals, but also American strength itself. No longer measured by military might or aggression against communist imperialism, newsprint reinforced diplomacy and negotiation as necessary qualities of a tenacious American president. As a result, the language and tone of the press allowed Eisenhower to transition seamlessly from a bellicose war hero to a champion of peace, with his steadfast reputation untarnished. In August 1959, as Eisenhower announced Premier Khrushchev’s upcoming American tour, the press had already laid the groundwork for American support of this momentous occasion. After hinting at the possibility of visit exchanges throughout the previous months, newsprint praised the

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower: "I Shall Go to Korea," October 24, 1952, accessed January 5, 2014, http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/korean_war/I_Shall_Go_To_Korea_1952_10_24.pdf.

² Dwight D. Eisenhower: "The President's News Conference," March 25, 1959, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11693>.

president's flexibility, not as the "appeasement" he had formerly rejected, but as a masterfully courageous step forward in preserving world peace.

By spring 1959, friction had gradually subsided in anticipation of the upcoming Foreign Ministers conference in May. In a telegram to Washington, Ambassador Thompson confirmed Khrushchev's goal to achieve Western concession and recognition of the GDR as an independent state. He emphasized Khrushchev's use of Berlin as a "lever" to secure Western cooperation and consent for high-level talks, meanwhile projecting an image of preeminent control in foreign relations with the Western powers.³ Finally, Thompson reinforced the widely held presumption that the premier did not want war over Berlin, but rather used it as a bargaining chip to bolster his prestige and bring the Western powers to the conference table. Therefore, he estimated, the Western powers had little reason to worry about serious confrontation with the Soviet Union regarding Berlin before the scheduled conference of Foreign Ministers.⁴

Although the American press continued its support for the Western Allies' unified, diplomatic front and efforts to mediate Cold War tensions, journalists did not whitewash the hopeless reality of the impending Foreign Minister's Conference. *Time* called it "the conference that could not succeed."⁵ Mikoyan had been blunt about the futility of the event, and Eisenhower had publicly conceded that no one in the Soviet Union other than Khrushchev could come to any agreement over Berlin.⁶ Nevertheless, *Time* hailed the West's "willingness to negotiate" to bring about "an impressive vision of

³ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis, 1958-1959*, Document 257.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "What's the Use?" *Time*, May 15, 1959, 20.

⁶ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 353.

a sensible European future.”⁷ Washington, as well as the press, understood that what Khrushchev wanted was a summit in which he could participate in discussions among the leaders of the world powers. Negotiations would likely stagnate until such an occasion. Once again, for the American media, the Soviet Union seemed determined to stagnate talks at Geneva, needlessly prolonging the Cold War, while the West put forth countless tenable positions designed to promote peace and stability in Germany.⁸

A Long Awaited Invitation

During the first week of July, seven American governors flew to Moscow to meet with various members of the Soviet government. Having shamelessly vied for a trip to America for years, Khrushchev again mentioned his desire to Governor W. Averell Harriman of New York.⁹ The press unsurprisingly reported the text of this conversation, and during Eisenhower’s press conference on July 8, Merriman Smith of United Press International asked the president about his thoughts on a possible exchange of visits. Although Eisenhower responded that he had “not reached any conclusion about the suggestion,” as this was “the first time [he had] heard of it,”¹⁰ Eisenhower was fully aware of Khrushchev’s wish for an invitation to America. If he had not heard of the particular conversation between Khrushchev and Harriman, he certainly had entertained the thought of a visit exchange long before July 8.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.; Drummond, “The Cloudy Summit: K’s Demand Doesn’t Make Meeting Look Productive,” *Washington Post*, April 1, 1959; George Sokolsky, “The Course of Empire,” *Washington Post*, April 2, 1959; Henry Hazlitt, “Negotiating With Soviets: Little Value Seen in Resumption of Foreign Ministers’ Conference,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1959.

⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Document 75.

¹⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower: “The President’s News Conference,” July 8, 1959, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11439>.

On July 9, 1959, during the six week recess of the Geneva Convention, Eisenhower met with Secretary Herter to discuss progress on the negotiations. Amid suggestions for additional compromise options, Eisenhower posed the idea of inviting Khrushchev to America for informal negotiations. Talks between foreign ministers had not yielded positive results. In order to keep communication alive and advance agreeable solutions on Berlin, Eisenhower speculated Khrushchev's long-awaited invitation to America might produce a relaxation of tensions.¹¹ Eisenhower, well aware of the impact of the press on public opinion and the propaganda of such a momentous invitation, recognized that he would have to "find a way of [extending the invitation] without appearing to be kowtowing or weakening." He stated, "Timing will have to be very carefully studied."¹²

The next day, Eisenhower met with Robert Murphy and instructed him to pass a message to Khrushchev through First Deputy Frol Kozlov on the possibility of an exchange of visits between Khrushchev and Eisenhower should the Geneva Conference yield substantial progress.¹³ Whether Murphy or Kozlov inadequately conveyed the contingencies surrounding progress at Geneva, or whether Khrushchev simply ignored them remains a point of contention, but Khrushchev clearly did not receive the message the way that Eisenhower intended. Taubman simply states that "Murphy transmitted an

¹¹ Taubman provides a detailed discussion of Khrushchev's desire for an invitation to the United States. See Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 416; Henry Shapiro, "Khrushchev Wants Visit Exchange," *Washington Post*, July 9, 1959. The article explains that on July 7, Khrushchev had expressed to seven American governors visiting Moscow that he wanted an exchange of visits between Eisenhower and himself.

¹² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VIII, Berlin Crisis*, Document 429

¹³ *Ibid.*, Document 431.

‘unqualified’ invitation,” to Eisenhower’s dismay.¹⁴ A response letter from Khrushchev accepting the invitation “with pleasure” confirmed the premier’s satisfaction with the upcoming visit, with no acknowledgment of the strings attached.¹⁵

Because of the paramount importance of timing the announcement of the upcoming Khrushchev trip, the press unsurprisingly received word of a possible exchange of visits over a week in advance. As several newspapers had already reported on Khrushchev’s public ploy for an American invitation earlier in July, the prospect had circulated among American readers before the official announcement.¹⁶ Nevertheless, gradual dissemination of the possibility and favorable consequences of such an exchange prevented a negatively charged shock to the American people. An early July *New York Times* article speculated on several hypothetical sites, “supposing he does come to the United States someday.” The article continued: “What Mr. Khrushchev must see if he comes here, is not so much the size of our accomplishments as the capacity for change and growth which makes our civilization viable and exciting.”¹⁷ This language not only introduced the idea of a Khrushchev visit with positive undertones, it also highlighted America’s adaptability and dynamic nature. A following July *Washington Post* article read: “Hardly any imagination at all is required to see the newsreel and television

¹⁴ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 416.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Document 91.

¹⁶ Shapiro, “Khrushchev Wants Visit Exchange,” *Washington Post*, July 9, 1959; Preston Grover, “Khrushchev Airs Hope to Fly Here,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 1959; Stevenson, “Tour for Khrushchev—The Real America,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1959; Osgood Caruthers, “Khrushchev Asks Eisenhower Visit: Soviet Chief Tells Governors His Own Trip to U.S. Would Also Be ‘Most Useful,’” *New York Times*, July 9, 1959; Schmidt, “President Scores Khrushchev Talk of War Threats: U.S. Visit Not Ruled Out,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1959; Jordan, “A Khrushchev Visit to U.S. Gains Support in Capital,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1959.

¹⁷ Stevenson, “Tour for Khrushchev—The Real America,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1959.

possibilities in such a tour— ... Khrushchev in one of those big Detroit auto plants ... [or] on a mechanized farm ...”¹⁸

Reports of positive domestic and international opinions about a potential exchange of visits set the backdrop for a favorable response to Eisenhower’s announcement on August 3. The *Washington Post* reported that the governors who visited the Soviet Union early in July supported the idea of inviting Khrushchev so that he and his fellow statesmen could learn more about America.¹⁹ A July *New York Times* article quoted former New York Governor Averell Harriman: “Mr. Harriman had said he thought one reason for inviting Premier Khrushchev was to let him see ‘what a tremendous job’ he has undertaken in promising to ‘catch up’ with the United States.”²⁰ Murrey Marder of the *Washington Post* emphasized the NATO allies’ support for a visit, and speculated that Khrushchev could come as early as September.²¹ The consensus of American newsprint was overwhelmingly in support of the invitation, stressing its doubtless effect in “keeping East-West contact in motion”²² and “keeping the lines of communication open.”²³

After Eisenhower’s August 3 press conference announcing the imminent Khrushchev visit in September, the press continued positive coverage of his decision, maintaining that the monumental pros outweighed any potential cons.²⁴ Careful to avoid

¹⁸ Childs, “Khrushchev Visit Seen This Year,” *Washington Post*, July 31, 1959.

¹⁹ Folliard, “Khrushchev Visit is Favored,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 1959.

²⁰ Jorden, “A Khrushchev Visit to U.S. Gains Support in Capital,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1959.

²¹ Marder, “Allies Back Visit By Khrushchev,” *Washington Post*, August 3, 1959.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Roberts, “Hints of Khrushchev Invitation Seen as Geneva or Post-Geneva Insurance,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 1959.

²⁴ Roberts, “Berlin Crisis Was Lever Premier Used to Win Way,” *Washington Post*, August 4, 1959; Childs, “Gains from Visit Outweigh the Risk,” *Washington Post*, August 4, 1959; Caruthers, “Nixon Wants

characterizing the invitation as a concession to Khrushchev, Marquis Childs of the *Washington Post* asserted: “If Khrushchev wanted it this way, planning the Berlin crisis in order to force some form of high level meeting, so did millions of ordinary citizens in every part of the world want such a meeting as they watched the drift toward nuclear war.”²⁵ Journalists praised the masterful diplomacy of Eisenhower, reiterating that, with “friendly talks . . . going on, the atmosphere of crisis and brinkmanship is almost certain to diminish.”²⁶ Across the various newsprint outlets, journalists praised Eisenhower’s diplomacy as “bold,” “courageous,” and “wise,” underscoring the global support for this risky move.²⁷

Both enemy and celebrity, Khrushchev fascinated the American people. Despite fears of his unpredictability in the uncertain nuclear age, Americans devoured the press coverage of Khrushchev. From conjecture as to how he might behave toward Americans, what he might wear at the white tie dinner, his wife’s hairstyle, and his party’s hourly itinerary, journalists could not write enough about this mysterious, communist “boogeyman” who would soon be on American soil.²⁸ As if he were a Hollywood movie star, a *Washington Post* article deemed speculation about Khrushchev’s white tie dinner

Khrushchev To See U.S. at First Hand,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1959; Jordan, “Most in Capital Welcome Visits: But Some Sound a Note of Caution,” *New York Times*, August 4, 1959.

²⁵ Childs, “Gains from Visit Outweigh the Risks,” *Washington Post*, August 4, 1959.

²⁶ Marder, “U.S. To Keep Berlin as Top Issue: Priority Remains on Easing Threat in Coming Talks,” *Washington Post*, September 2, 1959; Kenworthy, “Senators Favor Visit By Russian,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1959.

²⁷ Coblenz, “Adenauer Reassured by Ike Note,” *Washington Post*, August 4, 1959; Sokolsky, “These Days: A Sound Position,” *Washington Post*, August 31, 1959.

²⁸ Roberts, “The Big Questions as K-Day Nears,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1959; “Mr. K Will ‘Suit’ Himself at White Tie Dinner,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1959; “Khrushchev ‘White Tie’ Is Gray Four-In-Hand,” *Washington Post*, September 16, 1959; “Khrushchev Around the Clock,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1959; “Khrushchev’s Timetable,” *New York Times*, September 17, 1959; Peter Carlson, *K Blows Top*, 35.

attire, “Washington’s biggest parlor guessing game.”²⁹ Other articles posed more serious questions as to how Khrushchev might handle “hot questions” or “whether pickets or worse might bring a fiery reaction.”³⁰ On September 15, 1959, Americans arrived by the thousands to curiously and silently watch the Soviet superstar’s motorcade drive through Washington, DC.³¹

Mr. K Arrives

On the day of Khrushchev’s arrival, newsprint displayed support with various advertisements and inserts greeting the premier and his entourage. The *Washington Post* published one ad welcoming Khrushchev to America, which declared that “a great majority of our fellow citizens have made clear their approval of this historic exchange.”³² In an interview for the newspaper, Eric Ridder, the powerful, pro-Eisenhower publisher of the *Journal of Commerce of New York*, adamantly supported the invitation and negotiations with Khrushchev, stating, ““you ought to talk before the shooting starts. You might find a common meeting ground.””³³

Despite the reality that many Americans vigorously opposed Khrushchev’s visit, the press framed opposition as a minority viewpoint. Not all Americans shared the sense of restrained curiosity about Khrushchev. Several protesters held signs and wore buttons that read, “Khrushchev not welcome here,” as he passed through the Capitol.³⁴ Secretary of the Committee for National Mourning David Keyser organized a freedom rally on

²⁹ “Mr. K Will ‘Suit’ Himself at White Tie Dinner,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1959.

³⁰ Roberts, “The Big Questions as K-Day Nears,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1959.

³¹ Carlson, *K Blows Top*, 42; Salisbury, “Khrushchev Gets Big But Quiet Welcome From 200,000 On Arrival In Washington,” *New York Times*, September 16, 1959.

³² “Display Ad: 44,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1959.

³³ “Khrushchev to Be Trade Group Guest,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1959.

³⁴ Carlson, *K Blows Top*, 47.

September 14, in which he urged those against Khrushchev's stay in America to wear black armbands in protest.³⁵ The coverage of this demonstration of dissent did not focus on the protesters' motives or how Khrushchev's policies had specifically impacted their lives or families. The *Washington Post's* coverage of the freedom rally instead highlighted the fact that "only about one third of the 3000 chairs were filled," and that "observers regarded this as...low."³⁶ Even as little as journalists covered negative reactions to Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev, they implied that these dissenters were the minority.³⁷

During Khrushchev's twelve day tour of America, journalists upheld a favorable position toward Eisenhower's diplomacy in initiating the visit, even as they reinforced the portrait of Khrushchev as the enemy. The *Washington Post* reported on Eisenhower's growing popularity since the start of Khrushchev's trip, revealing a 3 percent increase from 61 to 64 percent.³⁸ Because of this bold act of diplomacy, Eisenhower had reached his highest popularity peak since 1957.³⁹ Thomas P. Whitney of the *Washington Post*

³⁵ Duscha, "Black Armbands, Cross in Sky Lead Sparse Protests to Visit," *Washington Post*, September 16, 1959.

³⁶ Ibid.; Morton Mintz, "Mourning Bands During Red Visit Urged at 'Freedom Rally' Here," *Washington Post*, September 15, 1959.

³⁷ "500 In City Protest Khrushchev's Visit," *New York Times*, September 14, 1959; "Refugee Pickets White House," *New York Times*, September 14, 1959; Russell Baker, "Crowds Thinner but Friendlier In Capital on Second Arrival: Khrushchev Attracts More Cheering Than on First Visit—Fewer Try to Demonstrate Their Displeasure," *New York Times*, September 25, 1959; Milton Wend, "Recognizing Need For Coexisting," *New York Times*, September 16, 1959.

³⁸ George Gallup, "Ike's Popularity Rises as Red Chief Begins Visit," *Washington Post*, September 16, 1959.

³⁹ Dwight Eisenhower, "Presidential Job Approval, 1953-1960," Adapted from the Gallup Poll and compiled by Gerhard Peters, accessed November 4, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php?pres=34&sort=pop&direct=DESC&Submit=DISPLAY>.

reported that even Khrushchev had “prais[ed] Eisenhower warmly for inviting him to America,” and called him a “great man.”⁴⁰

In offering maximal praise and accreditation to both the trip and to mediations, as a whole, J.A. Livingston of the *Washington Post* offered an outrageously over-the-top vision of the visit’s importance. Exaggerating the favorable outcomes of conciliatory diplomacy, he reported that the visit had the potential to produce not only “a reduction in armaments,” and an easing of Cold War hostilities, it might also bring “favorable long-term economic repercussions” in America as well as in the Soviet Union. With less money directed toward military and defense purposes, the United States “would be able to balance the budget” and lower taxes. In the Soviet Union, more money could go toward consumer goods that would elevate the standard of living. Therefore, small concessions over Berlin and disarmament would benefit both sides economically, and Eisenhower and Khrushchev would be “joint architect[s] of peace.”⁴¹

As the press maintained an enthusiastic tone in its coverage of Eisenhower’s invitation to Khrushchev, newsprint reiterated the adversarial image of Khrushchev himself.⁴² Numerous articles labeled him and communism the enemies of the free world. A September 1959 *Washington Post* bulletin declared that Khrushchev and communism were “responsible for the loss of freedom of hundreds of millions of people in Europe and in Asia....”⁴³ The bulletin proclaimed that this visit “should be the occasion of a

⁴⁰ Thomas P. Whitney, “Khrushchev Terms Ike ‘Great Man,’ Hecklers Anger Premier During New York Speech,” *Washington Post*, September 18, 1959.

⁴¹ J.A. Livingston, “Thaw in Cold War May Bring Splurge,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959.

⁴² “Mr. Khrushchev at the U.N.,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1959.

⁴³ “Display Ad 62,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1959.

renewed expression of America's dedication to freedom and justice in the world."⁴⁴ In this view, Eisenhower and the United States were the leaders of the free world, and, as such, should uphold the values of capitalism and freedom in negotiating for peace in times of turmoil.⁴⁵

In covering Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence, the press highlighted contradictions between his words and deeds.⁴⁶ Despite his placid sentiments regarding disarmament, the press emphasized his refusal to follow his own rhetoric. A September *Washington Post* article declared that Khrushchev "talked blandly of non-interference in the affairs of other countries, but ignored the record in Hungary."⁴⁷ Crediting Eisenhower with any potential peaceful developments resulting from the trip, and underscoring apparent contradictions between Khrushchev's words and deeds, the article continued: "Despite the difficulties [in achieving peace], because these two countries and systems...live in the same world, we must try. That is the continuing justification for Mr. Eisenhower's efforts."⁴⁸

Even before Eisenhower's scheduled informal talks with Khrushchev at Camp David, the press framed Khrushchev as the responsible party should the discussions prove unsuccessful.⁴⁹ Edward T. Folliard and Joseph Alsop of the *Washington Post* both cautioned Americans against high hopes for a miraculous agreement between the two

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Childs, "Brusque Mr. K. Hurts His Own Cause," *Washington Post*, September 22, 1959; Joseph Alsop, "Can Khrushchev See He's Wrong?" *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959; Whitney, "Disastrous Consequences Feared if Serious Incidents are Repeated," *Washington Post*, September 21, 1959.

⁴⁶ "Mr. Khrushchev's Campaign," *New York Times*, September 17, 1959.

⁴⁷ "Mr. Khrushchev's Peace," *Washington Post*, September 17, 1959.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Five K-Days," *New York Times*, September 20, 1959.

world powers in just twelve days. Although, they declared, Eisenhower was “hopeful,” as the instigator of peace would be, unless Khrushchev can be convinced that he is wrong—specifically in his boasts of Soviet superiority—there may be no substantial accomplishments from the visit.⁵⁰

As journalists employed laudatory language for Eisenhower, they portrayed Khrushchev as a crude, “squat”⁵¹ little Russian. The press had a field day documenting every cultural blunder and outlandish statement. Journalists incessantly commented on his short stature and weight, especially in comparison to Eisenhower. Recounting the events of Khrushchev’s arrival, Chalmers M. Roberts of the *Washington Post* underscored Khrushchev’s frame: “The President towered over the Premier who stands at five foot, five inches, and weighs 195 pounds.”⁵² He continued, pointing out that Eisenhower “had to slow down his West Point stride to keep in step with his guest.”⁵³ Joseph Alsop also commented on the Premier’s build, writing, “The solid, squat... figure is not outwardly impressive. There is nothing majestic or commanding, nothing to intimate the fearful power the man wields.”⁵⁴ George Dixon followed, calling Khrushchev a “colossal ham,”⁵⁵ describing both his body type and his outrageous, temperamental wit.

⁵⁰ Folliard, “Peace Talk Sounded as Sincere as his Boasts,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959; Joseph Alsop, “Can Khrushchev See He’s Wrong?” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959.

⁵¹ This was a favorite term by journalists at the *Washington Post*. Joseph Alsop and Edward T. Folliard used this term repeatedly to describe Khrushchev.

⁵² Roberts, “U.S., Soviet Too Strong to Quarrel, Khrushchev Declares in Toast to Ike,” *Washington Post*, September 16, 1959.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Joseph Alsop, “Matter of Fact: On Khrushchev Watching,” *Washington Post*, September 18, 1959.

⁵⁵ George Dixon, “Nikita’s Spectacular is Getting a Little Tiresome,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1959.

The press capitalized on Khrushchev's numerous language errors and cultural misconceptions. Reporters took every advantage to exploit mix-ups in interviews, especially when "Khrushchev caught himself predicting that 'capitalism would be victorious.'"⁵⁶ During the same interview, he referred to the American reporters as "comrades," but quickly corrected himself and used "gentlemen" instead.⁵⁷ Additionally, any time Khrushchev tried to speak English, even in the smallest capacity, the press took the occasion to make fun of his accent or mistakes, spelling the words on the page phonetically the way that he had pronounced them.⁵⁸

Other lighthearted, humorous accounts of Khrushchev included his trip to the Agriculture Department Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland, where he "patt[ed] a pig on the rump," and "declared that several in the pen were too fat."⁵⁹ Later, farmer Ezra Taft Benson revealed that "Khrushchev had conceded that 'Russians have much to learn from American agriculture.'"⁶⁰ Even as the press conjured a laugh at the Premier's expense, reporters slipped in the Cold War competition component at every turn. Reporters also had fun with Khrushchev's wife. Frances Lewine of the *Washington Post* dedicated an entire article to Nina Khrushcheva's experience eating a hotdog, "an American favorite."⁶¹ The article not only emphasized the fact that the Soviet Premier's

⁵⁶ "Slips of Khrushchev's Tongue Brighten Interview," *Washington Post*, September 17, 1959.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ "Premier Tries Out English, Calls City, 'Veree Gud,'" *Washington Post*, September 17, 1959; Aubrey Graves, "Benson, Khrushchev Talk of Sheep at Beltsville," *Washington Post*, September 17, 1959. Graves remarks that when Khrushchev yelled, "Good Morning" to the reporters, he "beamed his pleasure at having mastered at least these two English words," emphasizing his difficulty with the English language. Edith Evans Asbury, "Mme. Khrushchev Holds an Impromptu News Conference on a Field in Maryland: Answers Queries in Good English," *New York Times*, September 17, 1959; Jack Gould, "TV: Khrushchev in Idiomatic English," *New York Times*, September 17, 1959.

⁵⁹ Graves, "Benson, Khrushchev Talk of Sheep at Beltsville," *Washington Post*, September 17, 1959.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Frances Lewine, "Mrs. K. Munches Wienie," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1959.

wife had supremely enjoyed a classic American treat, the title made a mockery out of the incident: “Mrs. K Munches Wienie.”

Not all of the reports of Khrushchev’s blunders carried a playful tone. Reporters were quick to exploit the Premier’s explosive tendencies, especially with American freedom of speech.⁶² His insecurity, the press emphasized, caused him to take jokes and probing questions too seriously. Thomas P. Whitney of the *Washington Post* summed up the musings of the press over Khrushchev’s outbursts during interviews and press conferences:

Who can doubt that underneath the tough exterior of the ruthless Bolshevik statesman, there remains ever present that uncouth, dirty, embarrassed young man who feels an intangible superiority in many things to those who are to the manor born, a category in which he would include virtually all of Americans because of America’s wealth.⁶³

Other articles depicted Khrushchev as a “belligerent”⁶⁴ child, emphasizing his tendency to erupt in anger at any perception of disrespect.⁶⁵ Bill Gold of the *Washington Post* declared that if “someone says ‘no’ to [Khrushchev], he blows a gasket,” and called him an “abusive...bully.”⁶⁶ Joseph Alsop posited that, when he is “reading one of his shrewdly prepared speeches...stumbling every so often with a difficult word, he looks like any prosperous, hardworking farmer...who has reached the chairmanship of the local

⁶² Salisbury, “Khrushchev’s Associates Are Pleased With His U.S. Visit So Far: Heckling At Club is Now Minimized,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1959.

⁶³ Whitney, “Disastrous Consequences Feared if Serious Incidents are Repeated,” *Washington Post*, September 21, 1959.

⁶⁴ Bill Gold, “The District Line: Right to Talk Back Irks Khrushchev,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1959.

⁶⁵ “Khrushchev Threatens To Return Home,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

school board.”⁶⁷ If he does not have his prepared speech, “he is all animation, all vivid gesture.”⁶⁸

Of all of Khrushchev’s outbursts, his explosive fury over the cancellation of his trip to Disneyland received the most extensive press coverage. In the presence of over 300 of the world’s most famous celebrities in Hollywood, Khrushchev roared,⁶⁹ “What do you have there—rocket launching pads? Is there a cholera epidemic down there? Or have gangsters taken hold of the place who can destroy me? Your police are strong enough to lift up a bull; surely they are strong enough to take care of gangsters.”⁷⁰ This fit of anger, while humorous, displayed Khrushchev’s tendency to fly off the handle. The press coverage of this incident illuminated both the witty and terrifying aspects, presenting the American public with a concise portrait of this strange Russian outsider who regularly professed to hold the power to decimate half of the world’s population with nuclear warfare.⁷¹ Seen from an American perspective, he could transform instantly from a jolly, jovial figure to a ferocious hot-tempered monster. Positioned next to America’s beloved Eisenhower, the press made certain to present Khrushchev as the “bad guy” as an uncontested fact. If he could explode so quickly over a missed opportunity to see Disneyland, however, negotiations might be the safest option for humanity’s sake.

⁶⁷ Joseph Alsop, “Matter of Fact: On Khrushchev Watching,” *Washington Post*, September 18, 1959.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Whitney, “Khrushchev Vents Ire in Hollywood Over Security Ban on Disneyland Visit,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959.

⁷⁰ Carlson, *K Blows Top*, 61. Khrushchev also seems to be mocking America for its overblown fear and paranoia.

⁷¹ “Premier Annoyed by Ban On a Visit to Disneyland,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1959.

Several articles seemed determined to dispel the possibility that Khrushchev might charm the American people into falling for his communist propaganda.⁷² Not necessarily fearful that Khrushchev would win the propaganda battle and sell Americans on communism, the press, rather, showed concern that a favorable impression might sell Americans on the idea of Khrushchev as a reasonable negotiating partner. Marquis Childs of the *Washington Post* justified American “curiosity,” asserting that “it would be amazing”⁷³ if there were not curious crowds anxious to see the premier. He praised Americans’ ability to see through the propaganda ploys and even credited Khrushchev’s behavior for disproving the extremist “fears that we might be so tickled by Khrushchev that we would all lie down and play dead.”⁷⁴ Instead, he writes: “He has shown thus far little or no understanding of Western attitudes and Western psychology. He has been boastful on one hand and hypersensitive on the other... In short, he has been about as subtle as a bulldozer.”⁷⁵ Childs reassured readers that even as Americans across the country scrambled for opportunities and tickets to see Khrushchev at his various events, the American people were not so unsuspecting as to fall for Khrushchev’s rhetoric. Childs affirmed: “It is naïve to think, as many of the extremists seem to, that the public will be melted by the Khrushchev appeal.”⁷⁶ On two separate occasions, Edward T. Folliard referred to fears of American susceptibility to Khrushchev’s propaganda ploys. He contended that while President Eisenhower “believed that Khrushchev would try to do

⁷² “Propaganda Gain Feared,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1959; “Cardinal Warns of Peril in Visit: Predicts Propaganda Blast by Premier,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1959; “A ‘Naïve’ Demonstration,” *New York Times*, September 15, 1959.

⁷³ Childs, “Brusque Mr. K Hurts His Own Cause,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1959.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Childs, “Mr. K to Have a Tornado Tour,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1959.

a propaganda job in the United States,”⁷⁷ he did “not believe that [the] Soviet Premier... master debater [that he was], [would] fool the America people with his propaganda.”⁷⁸

In his September 17 press conference, President Eisenhower dismissed the Premier’s communist rhetoric by reiterating his own counterpropaganda. Reaffirming his faith in the American freedom, he juxtaposed the American and Soviet systems. He declared:

We do not have a real system; we have a way of life. We are concerned in giving every individual the maximum freedom to develop himself, and the government is really a help, not the complete director of the individual. So, since we believe that the feeling for freedom... is instinctive in men, we do think that the systematized order that is observed in Russia is a step backward, not forward.⁷⁹

Eisenhower confirmed to the American people that the United States, not the Soviet Union, operated on the right side of history.

The Spirit of Camp David

Despite efforts to discourage favorable impressions of the Premier, Khrushchev won the propaganda battle on some level during his time in America. Having been the star of every major headline on American television and newsprint, Khrushchev had undoubtedly achieved the recognition and pomp that he had desired from the United States. As a result, he displayed uncharacteristic diplomacy and assured Eisenhower that, not only did the Soviet government want a peaceful solution to the problems with the United States, he wanted to be sure to avoid any “injury to U.S. prestige.”⁸⁰ Once Khrushchev finished his American tour, he and his entourage flew to Camp David to

⁷⁷ Folliard, “Peace Talk Sounded as Sincere as his Boasts,” *Washington Post*, September 20, 1959.

⁷⁸ Folliard, “President Unafraid of Red’s Wiles,” *Washington Post*, September 18, 1959.

⁷⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower: “The President’s News Conference,” September 17, 1959, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11439>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

meet Eisenhower and began the serious discussions regarding the German question. After two days of meetings, the leaders reached some specific solutions, all of which involved American compliance with Soviet requests.⁸¹

On the American side, Eisenhower conceded that there would be no unification of Germany at that particular time, and that the Soviet government had the freedom to create its own peace treaty with East Germany, as long as it did not interfere with the Western allies' position in Berlin. Additionally, Eisenhower agreed to study Khrushchev's plan for disarmament. Finally, Eisenhower consented to high-level summit talks that Khrushchev had proposed for months. In return, Khrushchev pledged not to interfere with the Western powers in Berlin and lifted his time limit on the question of German settlement.⁸² He stressed that the "Soviet government had...never intended to create a situation of duress."⁸³ Whether Khrushchev stretched the truth on this point is not as important as the fact that he warmed to Eisenhower and to the American people after receiving validation of his position as a powerful world leader. Khrushchev returned to the Soviet Union victorious, having achieved what he wanted all along.

After assessing Khrushchev's visit and the Camp David discussions, the Eisenhower administration concluded that Khrushchev's "impression...[of a]...warm reception by the U.S. public" contributed to "more moderate...terms...for a U.S.-Soviet détente."⁸⁴ As a result of the premier's trip, the administration speculated that, "at least

⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume IX, Berlin Crisis, 1959-1960*, Document 13.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Document 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part I, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Document 136.

temporarily, [Khrushchev] presumably believe[d] he ha[d] achieved a partial détente at little or no cost to the bloc.”⁸⁵ Additionally, this report stated: “The degree to which Khrushchev has committed himself to his alleged role as a peacemaker...indicates that he will continue, for the time being...to pose as such and to be careful to avoid major crises for which the USSR might to its own citizens appear responsible.”⁸⁶ Once the Premier had returned home, Eisenhower and his Administration saw substantial value in the bold decision to invite the leader of the communist world to America. At least until the summit, they believed that “some of the ice around East-West relations...had melted.”⁸⁷

The press echoed the administration’s sense of accomplishment and reinforced Eisenhower as the Cold War hero for peace in the aftermath of the visit. Highlighting the president’s unwavering determination and skill in his diplomatic endeavors with Khrushchev at Camp David, *Time* commended Eisenhower’s achievements in securing Khrushchev’s agreement “to a removal of all vestiges of ultimatum or threat on Berlin negotiations.”⁸⁸ Having framed the initial invitation in a positive light, *Time* emphasized the importance of this small step toward a German solution and portrayed Eisenhower as a master of negotiation and Cold War diplomacy. The fact that the Eisenhower had backed down on the issue of German reunification made no difference. The media overwhelmingly emphasized the positive effects of Khrushchev’s trip in reducing international friction and creating an air of friendship between the two powers.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower: "The President's News Conference," September 28, 1959, accessed November 7, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11439>.

⁸⁸ “The Camp David Conference,” *Time*, October 5, 1959, 20.

⁸⁹ “K. Goes Home,” *Time*, October 5, 1959, 19; “Upside Down,” *Time*, October 12, 1959, 30; “After the Visit,” *Time*, October 12, 1959, 25.

Upon Khrushchev's return home, *Time* reiterated the newly developing atmosphere of friendship with various new characterizations of the premier. Articles described Khrushchev as "tough, petulant, vital, bantering, [and] implacable," but at the same time, dispelled the vision of Khrushchev as "the Vodka-Slopping Peasant," and called him a "skillful and dynamic leader," prone to "uncontrolled willfulness, ignorance and ill temper."⁹⁰ Still emphasizing his ignorance and tendency to publicly explode, the media shifted its portrayal of Khrushchev toward a more complex, human version after his time in America. Clearly, however, Khrushchev's "assurances that he sought peace" remained suspicious.⁹¹ The media urged the American people against overzealous optimism, but maintained that American government "officials found reason to hope that Khrushchev was sincere." If nothing else, the media characterized the trip as a chance for Khrushchev to understand the United States and American way of life. Several articles revealed that Khrushchev "was indeed vastly impressed with many of the things he saw" in America.⁹²

As the media emphasized the easing Cold War tensions as a result of the visit, journalists continued to report on the Soviet economic lag behind America. As if to assure Americans that their Soviet nemesis, even as it became friendlier, would not surpass the United States, media coverage of the Soviet economy focused on downturns and low standards of living.⁹³ According to these reports, America had no need to worry for two reasons: first, Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev had produced Soviet

⁹⁰ "The Long March," *Time*, September 28, 1959.

⁹¹ "Opinions and Impressions," *Time*, October 19, 1959.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ "The Great Upsurge," *Time*, November 9, 1959, 32; "Ivan in Creditland," *Time*, October 19, 1959, 46; "Slowdown for the Soviets," *Time*, October 12, 1959, 108.

concessions on the Berlin ultimatum and relaxed the previously tumultuous relationship between the two nations. Secondly, the Soviet Union was extremely weak economically and had “no chance to match the economic level of the U.S. in the foreseeable future.”⁹⁴

On November 6, 1959, American officials held a cabinet meeting to discuss the effects of the Khrushchev visit. Even after several weeks had passed, the Eisenhower administration upheld the previous assertion that the trip had been a success, despite the absence of significant policy changes on the German question. Although the administration acknowledged that long term effects needed more time to surface, the trip had created a “new era of peace,” as nations across the world used the term “the spirit of Camp David” as synonymous with harmony and compromise.⁹⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, stressed the value of the invitation in relations with the “non-white [third] world.”⁹⁶ He asserted that the U.S. invitation to Khrushchev might change these people’s perception of America as a more open-minded nation. Along with financial aid, he believed, this act of diplomacy might contribute to the winning hearts and minds of peoples in the underdeveloped countries experiencing political upheaval.⁹⁷

Overall, domestic newsprint favored the Khrushchev invitation and overwhelmingly celebrated President Eisenhower as the tough leader who proved flexible when necessary and brought about a period of détente in the Cold War. As the year came to a close, the media emphasized the growing friendly relationship between Eisenhower

⁹⁴ “Slowdown for the Soviets,” *Time*, October 12, 1959, 108.

⁹⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus*, Document 137.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

and Khrushchev. Rather than a sign of weakness, newsprint hailed Eisenhower's willingness to extend a gesture of rapprochement as a courageous and bold stroke of genius. With the help of the media, from his 1953 campaign rhetoric of rollback, to the start of 1960, Eisenhower had seamlessly transitioned from a staunch, anti-communist military icon, to the Cold War champion of peace.

CONCLUSION

“This is the President of the United States speaking. Through the marvels of scientific advance my voice is coming to you from a satellite circling in outer space. My message is a simple one...I convey to you and all mankind America’s wish for peace on earth and good will toward men everywhere.”¹

Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 19, 1958

This taped message from Eisenhower was transmitted from Atlas, the American intercontinental missile launched over fourteen months after the Soviet Union’s Sputnik I, and just one month after Khrushchev’s Berlin demands. The peaceful rhetoric of the cold warrior president juxtaposed with the technology resulting from competition with the Soviet Union impeccably embodies the transition of Eisenhower’s image and the cold war environment of 1958.

With the help of the press, the Eisenhower administration abandoned its hardliner platform and aggressive rollback in favor of a peaceable, diplomatic position.

Eisenhower’s Operation Candor contacts throughout major news media outlets paved the way for American acceptance of a new line of discourse from the cold warrior president, absolving him of military commitment in Berlin, rather than pressing for a belligerent response to Soviet threats. In the process, the media rendered Eisenhower’s strong, war hero image untarnished and praised his conciliatory efforts to avoid military conflict.

Early on in Eisenhower’s first term, his Atoms for Peace campaign cemented his moral, benevolent persona and allowed for American support for atomic testing and arms buildup in the name of peace. Publically declaring candor with the American people, Eisenhower navigated the suspicions and uncertainties of the nuclear age behind the guise

¹ “Symbol of Hopes,” *Time*, December 29, 1958, 9.

of peace and honesty. Sanctioning atomic technological development and stockpiling nuclear weapons, Eisenhower intended to deter and defend against a Soviet attack rather than provoke one himself. The press, meanwhile, championed the president's openness, echoing his claims of American moral superiority in the cold war.

Despite proactive efforts to avoid conflict while maintaining his staunch, anti-communist reputation, Khrushchev's November 1958 ultimatum reignited the fears of military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Although Eisenhower had no intention of allowing the Berlin Crisis to escalate to war, American media reinforced his steadfast position in support of his allies and his strength and resolve in the midst of Soviet threats. Circulating the language of informal diplomacy and favoring a new, diplomatic approach to the Cold War, the press garnered American support for a softer strategy. Rather than evidence of weakness, the media depicted Eisenhower's restraint in Berlin as masterful diplomacy.

Celebrating Eisenhower's invitation to Khrushchev, journalists followed the premier across America, reporting his every move. Depicting Khrushchev as both volatile and foolish, the press maintained his enemy status while reassuring the public of Eisenhower's upper hand in U.S.-Soviet relations. By the time Khrushchev returned to the Soviet Union, the "spirit of Camp David" had become a household term, thanks to Eisenhower's political maneuvers. As 1959 came to an end, a *détente* between the world powers appeared underway.

In May 1960, Eisenhower reversed all progress in U.S.-Soviet relations and halted negotiations indefinitely. Despite the breakthrough in communications between the two powers, Eisenhower approved a U-2 spy plane mission to fly over and monitor secret

Soviet nuclear and defense sites. CIA intelligence confirmed that because of the angle of the sun, Eisenhower had a mere three month window to photograph certain Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles. If he did not risk the mission, he would have to wait until the next year to obtain the photos. As a result, Eisenhower gave the go-ahead.²

Soviet intelligence detected and shot down the plane, capturing the American pilot the CIA had presumed dead. Khrushchev exposed American attempts to cover up the mission as a failed NASA initiative and discovered, to his dismay, that Eisenhower had personally sanctioned the flight. Learning not only that that his “friend” had authorized the breach of trust, but that he refused to apologize, Khrushchev refused to attend the summit, stagnating further international progress between the East and West. He cancelled Eisenhower’s scheduled trip to the Soviet Union and resolved to halt further negotiations with the U.S. until Eisenhower left office.³

With the decision to approve the U-2 spy plane mission just weeks before the summit, Eisenhower shattered any real prospects on a détente for years to come. The president’s affinity for covert cold war strategy alongside his close relationship with the press promoted his image as a peacekeeper and allowed for monumental steps toward arbitration. In the end, however, clandestine activity backfired, destroying the chance for authentic mediations. This time, the press was powerless to reverse the damage.

² Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall*, 135.

³ Taubman, *Khrushchev*, 442-447.

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