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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #02397-84
18 April 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

FROM:
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

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SUBJECT: Recommended Discussion Item for Meeting with Mr. McFarlane

1. Recommendation: Despite Western protests and Soviet avowals that they do not intend to change the rules in the Berlin air corridors, the Soviets continue unilaterally to impose restrictions and the West has not yet developed a strategy -- beyond continued talking with the Soviets -- to deal with the situation. I recommend that you discuss this matter with Mr. McFarlane during your regular meeting with him. Suggested talking points are provided as Attachment #1.

2. Background:

- Air access to Berlin is governed by a post-war agreement that established the three corridors;
- In the early 60's the Soviets unilaterally imposed a 10,000 foot flight ceiling in the corridors. The Allies rejected the ceiling in principle but accepted it in practice.
- In the fall of 1979 the Soviets began imposing minimum altitudes (usually around 5,000 feet) over some training areas. Despite Allied apprehension over the precedent a modus vivendi was developed for the sake of flight safety and the West accepted the Soviet restrictions. A joint CIA/DIA retrospective has shown that the Soviets have indeed used the reserved air space for air exercise activities.

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- On 20 February of this year the Soviets began periodically imposing minimum flight levels for the entire length of one or more corridors. The Soviets claimed that their intent was to ensure flight safety. But these reservations forced flights going into Berlin to use an undesirable landing pattern, as can be seen in the graphic that constitutes Attachment #2.
- Although objecting that the Soviets had no right to impose such reservations, the Allies have obeyed them in practice. They have continued to protest the Soviet reservations at various levels but have so far rejected the advice of US mission Berlin (given on 8 March) that "we should fly through the restricted area to demonstrate to the Soviets that we have no intention of simply acquiescing in their attempt to change the air regime."
- A retrospective study of the reservations since 20 February shows that the Soviets behaved prudently in that they initially did not fly in the air space they had reserved. Having established that the allies would not fly through the reserved air space, however, they have now begun to use that air space for air exercises.
- On 12 April Dobrynin (as well as the Soviet Ambassadors in Paris and London) was called in to be told that the "unilateral assertion of the primacy of Soviet flights cannot continue". Dobrynin averred that the Soviets had no intentions of precipitating a crisis or making a unilateral change to the air regime (see attachment #3 for the account of the Eagleburger-Dobrynin meeting).
- On 13 April State convened a meeting at which DAS Niles briefed the Dobrynin meeting and expressed the hope that the Soviets would now stop imposing reservations. I argued that that was an optimistic scenario and that we should develop a strategy to be implemented if the Soviets did not desist from imposing reservations. The rest of the meeting was inconclusive and no such strategy was developed (as can be seen in Attachment #4 - the State cable summarizing the meeting).
- On 16 and 17 April the Soviets once again imposed reservations.

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3. Current Situation: In sum, we keep protesting the reservations, the Soviets keep imposing them, and we have no plan for dealing with their tactic of sweet talk and tenacity on the issue. As you know, we are examining the possibility that the Soviet air reservations constitute but a larger pattern of activity, (bigger military exercises and the possible escalation in Afghanistan, etc.) designed to intimidate the U.S. But action on Berlin cannot await the completion of that examination. The longer the situation is allowed to develop as it has so far, the harder it will be to reestablish acceptable flight rules. I recommend that the USG rapidly develop a new approach, encompassing both a plan to fly through the air space reserved by the Soviets and a negotiating package of trade-offs intended to meet both allied and Soviet concerns.



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Attachments: As stated

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Attachment #1

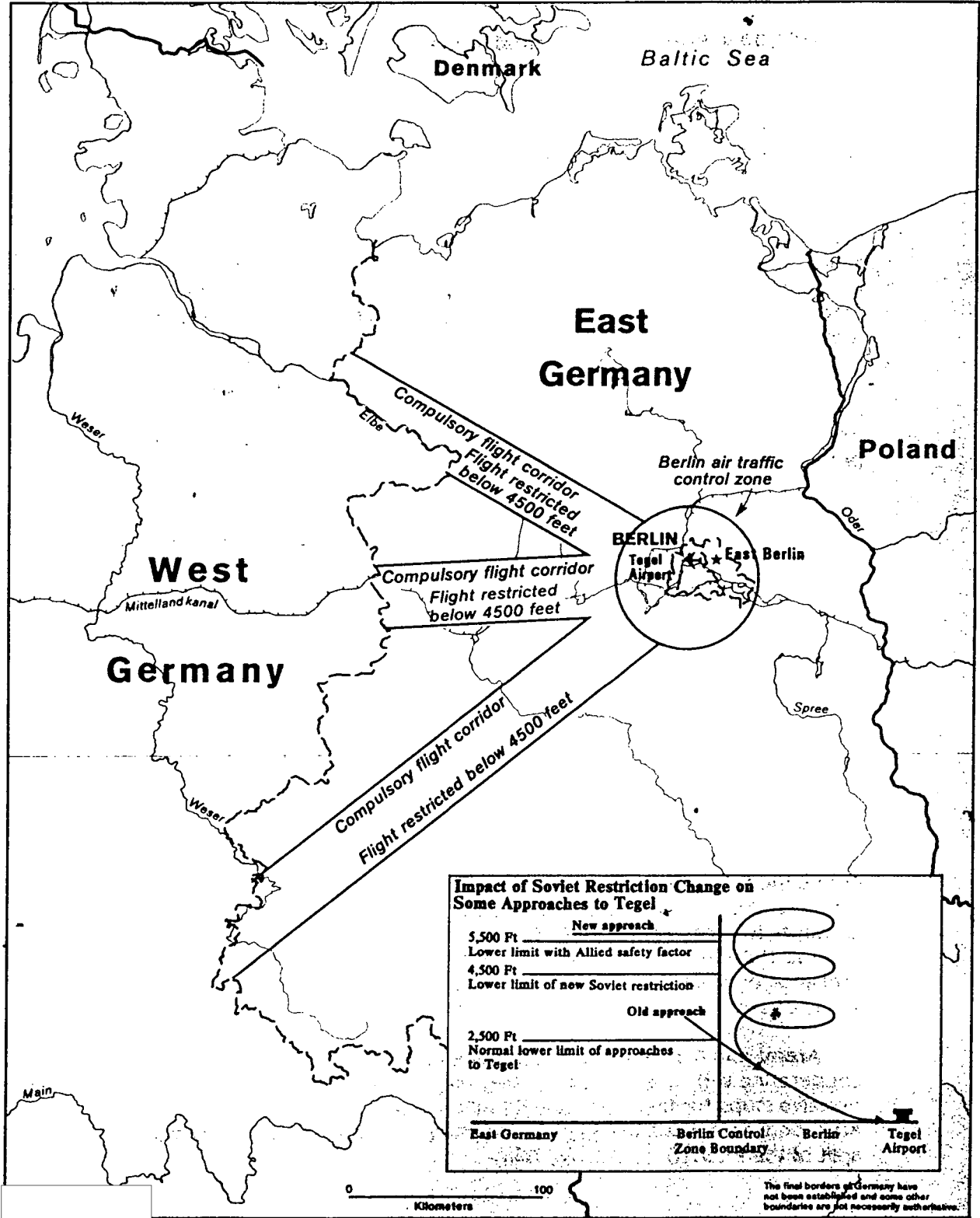
TALKING POINTS FOR DCI MEETING WITH MCFARLANE

BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR RESERVATIONS

- I am concerned about the lack of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to deal with the unilateral reservations the Soviets are imposing in the Berlin air corridors.
- These reservations not only contravene the normal way of doing business in the Berlin Air Safety Center but force aircraft to adopt undesirable landing patterns.
- So far our protests to the Soviets have produced much sweet talk but have not deterred the Soviets from imposing new reservations whenever they wish.
- I suggest that you initiate rapid action to develop a comprehensive strategy for countering the Soviet actions. The strategy should include both a plan to fly through the Soviet-reserved air space and a negotiating package intended to meet both Allied and Soviet concerns.

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Berlin Air Corridor Altitude Restrictions



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