



The Three Essentials

Mit seinem Berlin-Ultimatum vom 27. November 1958 zwang der sowjetische Staats- und Parteichef Nikita S. Chruschtschow die Westmächte an den Verhandlungstisch. Deren Regierungschefs waren sich keineswegs einig, wie sie auf die Forderungen Chruschtschows reagieren sollten. Doch in einem Punkt herrschte letztlich Übereinstimmung: Die Truppen aus West-Berlin abzuziehen, kam nicht in Frage. Nach den Gesprächen, die US-Präsident John F. Kennedy am 3. und 4. Juni 1961 mit Nikita S. Chruschtschow geführt hatte, fasste er diese Haltung in einer Fernseh- und Radioansprache am 25. Juli 1961 in drei Grundsätzen, den „Three Essentials“, zusammen. Er bekräftigte darin, dass die USA entschlossen seien, West-Berlin ohne Wenn und Aber zu verteidigen. Aber von Gesamtberlin war keine Rede. Das hieß: Was die Sowjetunion in ihrem Sektor tat, war ihre Sache. Der endgültige Beweis für diese Haltung war die Reaktion der Westmächte auf den Mauerbau am 13. August 1961.

Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Berlin Crisis, July 25, 1961

[Delivered from the President's Office at 10 p.m.]

Good evening:

Seven weeks ago tonight I returned from Europe to report on my meeting with Premier Khrushchev and the others. His grim warnings about the future of the world, his aide memoire on Berlin, his subsequent speeches and threats which he and his agents have launched, and the increase in the Soviet military budget that he has announced, have all prompted a series of decisions by the Administration and a series of consultations with the members of the NATO organization. In Berlin, as you recall, he intends to bring to an end, through a stroke of the pen, first our legal rights to be in West Berlin--and secondly our ability to make good on our commitment to the two million free people of that city. That we cannot permit.

We are clear about what must be done--and we intend to do it. I want to talk frankly with you tonight about the first steps that we shall take. These actions will require sacrifice on the part of many of our citizens. More will be required in the future. They will require, from all of us, courage and perseverance in the years to come. But if we and our allies act out of strength and unity of purpose--with calm determination and steady nerves--using restraint in our words as well as our weapons. I am hopeful that both peace and freedom will be sustained.

The immediate threat to free men is in West Berlin. But that isolated outpost is not an isolated problem. The threat is worldwide. Our effort must be equally wide and strong, and not be obsessed by any single manufactured crisis. [...]



This map makes very dear the problem that we face. The white is West Germany--the East is the area controlled by the Soviet Union, and as you can see from the chart, West Berlin is 110 miles within the area which the Soviets now dominate--which is immediately controlled by the so-called East German regime.

We are there as a result of our victory over Nazi Germany--and our basic rights to be there, deriving from that victory, include both our presence in West Berlin and the enjoyment of access across East Germany. These rights have been repeatedly confirmed and recognized in special agreements with the Soviet Union. Berlin is not a part of East Germany, but a separate territory under the control of the allied powers. Thus our rights there are clear and deep-rooted. But in addition to those rights is our commitment to sustain--and defend, if need be--the opportunity for more than two million people to determine their own future and choose their own way of life.

Thus, our presence in West Berlin, and our access thereto, cannot be ended by any act of the Soviet government. The NATO shield was long ago extended to cover West Berlin--and we have given our word that an attack upon that city will be regarded as an attack upon us all. [...]

Quelle: John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8259>