

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

Memo for the President.

This may be of  
passing interest to you.

W. H. Taft



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Memorandum for the Secretary

Authority E.O. 10501

July 29, 1948

U.S. PUBLIC OPINION ON THE BERLIN SITUATION

The following are the principal elements in public comment which continues to be extremely heavy, particularly in the daily press from all parts of the country.

1. The overwhelming majority of press and radio commentators remain united in support of the official U.S. position--that we shall not be "coerced" out of Berlin.
2. At the same time, there is very strong sentiment to the effect that this Government should explore every possibility of a negotiated solution, providing that such a solution does not violate our principles and our national interests.
3. The position taken by a small number of influential papers indicates that these sources do not believe our position in Berlin is worth risking a war, implying support for evacuation if the alternative is the use of force (e.g., Omaha World-Herald, Detroit News).
4. On balance, however, this attitude is heavily outweighed by the belief that surrender in Berlin would only result in future aggression elsewhere.
5. In contrast to the situation prevailing a few weeks ago, there now appears to be substantial support for another Four Power conference to discuss the whole German question--providing the Berlin blockade is lifted. While considerable doubt exists as to whether such a conference could accomplish anything, nevertheless, this step is favored by many "if only for the record", and by some on the "off-chance" that an acceptable settlement could be reached.
6. Most of this comment stresses that the conference cannot succeed unless Russia is prepared to modify her previous demands. For example, there is strong opposition to permitting Russia a voice in the Ruhr control and to the establishment of a "centralized" government which would permit Germany to become a Soviet satellite. However, Lippmann continues to press for the negotiation of a general settlement to effect the withdrawal of all troops--a course also urged by James P. Warburg and David Lawrence.
7. While the possibility of UN action has received little discussion during the past week, it is evident from previous discussion that such a step would be supported by most observers if direct negotiations fail to break the deadlock.

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