**John F. Kennedy and the Berlin Crisis**

The Berlin crisis began in 1948 before the assumption of office by John F. Kennedy as the US president. The Premier of the Soviet Union at the time, Khrushchev, demanded the withdrawal of the Western forces from Berlin to fulfil the agreement by Allied Forces during World War II. However, the demand was treated as an injunction that did not sit well with the US. As a result, US President Dwight held talks with the Premier of the Soviet Union, but the words only temporarily deescalated matters without finding a solution to the Berlin Crisis. However, the impending elections in the US cut short the conversation, and Khrushchev had to give time to the elections so he could continue the negotiations with the next administration. When JF Kennedy assumed power, however, rather than an advancement in the negotiations, the crisis escalated. The position taken is that JF Kennedy only served to escalate the problem by intensifying the existing US foreign policy of containment by activating reserve troops and expanding military budgets for such containment escalating the Cold War.

**The Expansion of the Military Budget and Activation of Reserve Troops**

The observation that JF Kennedy escalated the Berlin Crisis and, with it, the Cold War is informed by the course of action that Kennedy took in response to the demand that Khrushchev gave over the withdrawal of Western troops from Berlin. It would be considered pragmatic to take such a hard stance given Berlin's role in the ongoing Cold War. However, the preceding events before Kennedy assumed office warranted a continuation of talks on peacefully resolving the conflict. Kennedy's response to the demand was to activate 15,000 reserve troops and station them in Berlin as well as an expansion of the military budget (Phillips, 2022). The move aggravated the situation by further antagonizing the Soviet Union, the lead players on the Communist side of the Cold War.

The move by Kennedy to activate and position additional military personnel in Berlin without any further negotiations with other key players was a confrontation unto itself. Perhaps an argument can be created that the move would make the Soviet Union back down, but all it did was trigger an unprecedented move. The Soviet Union had an issue with the continued flow of people from the East to the West, which would have jeopardized her position and influence in Berlin (Bryan, 2020). The increase in the number of US forces served to compound this fear, prompting a radical move that culminated in the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13th, 1961. Families were separated, and the dissatisfaction was apparent for all to see (Batchelder, 2020). The fundamental question, therefore, is whether JF Kennedy was right in his reaction that saw the escalation of the crisis and if Khrushchev was also within his rights to employ the countermeasure. It is argued that Khrushchev opted for a wall rather than a military confrontation which would have seen an eruption of a nuclear crisis (Batchelder, 2020). All factors considered, the response to these questions will remain subjective based on the side one finds themselves in as far as the war between communism and democracy is concerned.

**The Significance of the Berlin Crisis in the Cold War**

Considering the significance of Berlin in the Cold War at the time, the move by JF Kennedy is justified as it was aimed at ensuring that the pro-democracy camp won the Cold War. In his speech that ushered in his reaction to the demands of the Soviet Union, Kennedy reiterated that Berlin was a symbol of freedom, which meant that the US could not comply with the demands of the Soviet Union (Munton, 2021). It was evident that the freedom that Kennedy alluded to was freedom from the spread of communism as fronted by the Soviet Union, and it so happened that Berlin was the epicentre of the Cold War battle at the time. In consideration of the moral obligation that the office confers to the president to advance the country's foreign policy, it could be argued that while the move by JF Kennedy escalated the Berlin Crisis, it also contributed to balancing of scales when it came to the Cold War (Munton, 2021). Therefore, the significance of Berlin in the Cold War justified Kennedy's response and shaped the subsequent course of action regarding US Foreign Policy.

**Conclusion**

President John F. Kennedy certainly did not start the Berlin Crisis, but he indeed escalated the crisis, creating the conditions that culminated in the erection of the Berlin Wall. The reaction to the demands by Khrushchev escalated not only the Berlin Crisis but also the Cold War and redefined US Foreign Policy. While the previous administrations employed military containment as part of their Foreign Policies, JF Kennedy expanded the scale of such military containment. The expansion of the military budget and the activation of 15,000 reserve troops set the stage for subsequent administrations to invest heavily in military presence on foreign soil. This policy continues to exist even after the Cold War. In summary, therefore, JF Kennedy was integral in the direction the Berlin Crisis took, the trajectory of the Cold War, and the shaping of the US Foreign Policy.

**References**

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