



Berlin 1961

By Frederick Kempe

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe

A fresh, controversial, brilliantly written account of one of the epic dramas of the Cold War-and its lessons for today.

"History at its best." -Zbigniew Brzezinski

"Gripping, well researched, and thought-provoking, with many lessons for today." -Henry Kissinger

"Captures the drama [with] the 'You are there' storytelling skills of a journalist and the analytical skills of the political scientist." - General Brent Scowcroft

In June 1961, Nikita Khrushchev called it "the most dangerous place on earth." He knew what he was talking about.

Much has been written about the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later, but the Berlin Crisis of 1961 was more decisive in shaping the Cold War-and more perilous. For the first time in history, American and Soviet fighting men and tanks stood arrayed against each other, only yards apart. One mistake, one overzealous commander-and the trip wire would be sprung for a war that would go nuclear in a heartbeat. On one side was a young, untested U.S. president still reeling from the Bay of Pigs disaster. On the other, a Soviet premier hemmed in by the Chinese, the East Germans, and hard-liners in his own government. Neither really understood the other, both tried cynically to manipulate events. And so, week by week, the dangers grew.

Based on a wealth of new documents and interviews, filled with fresh-sometimes startling-insights, written with immediacy and drama, *Berlin 1961* is a masterly look at key events of the twentieth century, with powerful applications to these early years of the twenty- first.

 [Download Berlin 1961 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Berlin 1961 ...pdf](#)

Berlin 1961

By Frederick Kempe

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe

A fresh, controversial, brilliantly written account of one of the epic dramas of the Cold War-and its lessons for today.

"History at its best." -Zbigniew Brzezinski

"Gripping, well researched, and thought-provoking, with many lessons for today." -Henry Kissinger

"Captures the drama [with] the 'You are there' storytelling skills of a journalist and the analytical skills of the political scientist." - General Brent Scowcroft

In June 1961, Nikita Khrushchev called it "the most dangerous place on earth." He knew what he was talking about.

Much has been written about the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later, but the Berlin Crisis of 1961 was more decisive in shaping the Cold War-and more perilous. For the first time in history, American and Soviet fighting men and tanks stood arrayed against each other, only yards apart. One mistake, one overzealous commander-and the trip wire would be sprung for a war that would go nuclear in a heartbeat. On one side was a young, untested U.S. president still reeling from the Bay of Pigs disaster. On the other, a Soviet premier hemmed in by the Chinese, the East Germans, and hard-liners in his own government. Neither really understood the other, both tried cynically to manipulate events. And so, week by week, the dangers grew.

Based on a wealth of new documents and interviews, filled with fresh- sometimes startling-insights, written with immediacy and drama, *Berlin 1961* is a masterly look at key events of the twentieth century, with powerful applications to these early years of the twenty- first.

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #850558 in Books
- Published on: 2011-05-10
- Released on: 2011-05-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 2.00" h x 6.40" w x 9.10" l, 2.05 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 608 pages

 [Download Berlin 1961 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Berlin 1961 ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe

Editorial Review

[Amazon.com Review](#)

Author Q&A with Frederick Kempe



Q: What led you to write this book?

A: The Cold War is still the least understood and worst reported of our three world wars. Berlin was its epicenter. The year 1961 was the most decisive. I wanted to tell the story of that year. And I wanted to tell it through its protagonists, as rich a cast of characters as history could provide. I also wanted to satisfy my own questions about whether the Berlin Wall could have been avoided—and whether the Cold War could have been ended much earlier. Might we have been able to help liberate a whole generation of Eastern Europeans—tens of millions of people—three decades earlier?

Then, after President Obama's election, I was even more motivated to finish my research. The reason is that this is also a story of a brilliant but inexperienced president dealing with issues far beyond his skill set. Kennedy's first year in office proved to be one of the worst of any modern presidency. U.S. presidents shape world history—and in this case it is not a positive story.

Q: Much has been written about the Cold War in general and about this particular time and place. What's different about this book?

A: Two aspects are quite different from what has appeared before. First, I pull in all the strands about this historic year that haven't been in a single book: the Kennedy story, the Khrushchev story, the Ulbricht and Adenauer stories. I also draw upon recently released documents in Russia, Germany, and the U.S. that haven't yet been put into a single story. I weave these into a narrative that is both human and historic, as has been my instinct to do as a journalist. Second and more important, the book builds the best cases to date that Kennedy acquiesced to the border closure and the building of the Wall. The record shows that in many respects he wrote the script that Khrushchev followed—as long as Khrushchev restricted his actions to Soviet-controlled East Berlin and East Germany, Kennedy would accept his actions. Kennedy falsely

believed that if East Germany could end its refugee stampede, Khrushchev might become a more willing negotiator on a set of other issues. It was a tragic misreading of the man and of the situation. Berlin paid for it—as did tens of millions of people.

Q: Among the main points you highlight in this book are the self-reinforcing misinterpretations, miscommunications, and misunderstandings between the U.S. and the USSR. What examples stand out to you as the most important?

A: They began years before Kennedy took office. The U.S. never fully recognized or acted upon how dramatic was the break between Khrushchev and Stalinism at the 20th Party Congress in 1956. Khrushchev's call for peaceful coexistence with the capitalist West was never fully explored. Nor did we ever answer or reward his support for Finnish and Austrian neutrality and his reductions in military personnel and spending. During Kennedy's presidency, the misreading began when Khrushchev released captured U.S. airmen and Kennedy failed to recognize the potential importance of the gesture. It continued when he misinterpreted a relatively unimportant hard-line propaganda speech by Khrushchev as a declaration of an even more aggressive Soviet challenge aimed at him. From Khrushchev's side, he often listened more to his own insecurities than what was warranted by the situation. He was enormously vulnerable to perceived slights—he would respond excessively to moments like the U-2 incident and Kennedy's State of the Union speech and the U.S. Minuteman missile test. However, there was one moment when Khrushchev listened closely to Kennedy's communication—and that regarded what the president would be willing to accept in Berlin. Then Khrushchev acted very much according to the clear messages he received.

Q: Do you think we could have ended the Cold War earlier if Kennedy had managed his relationship with Khrushchev differently?

A: As General Brent Scowcroft says in the foreword to the book, history doesn't reveal its alternatives. My own view is that the Soviet empire would have begun to unravel earlier had Kennedy held the line—but we will never know. It is unclear how the Soviets would have responded to that without a Gorbachev and a Yeltsin in charge. Would they have backed down, as they did during the Berlin Airlift of 1948, or would they have defended what they controlled, as they did in Budapest in 1956? The key difference between those two events was a demonstration of resolve by the U.S. with its nuclear superiority. I am certain of one thing: East Germany would have collapsed if the communists hadn't put up the Wall to stop the refugee flow—and that would have had severe consequences for the rest of the Soviet bloc. After all, it is the refugee flood that prompted its collapse twenty-eight years later. Whether or not the Cold War would have ended earlier, Kennedy certainly saved Khrushchev from a lot of trouble then by acquiescing to the building of the Wall.

Q: *Berlin 1961* is described as being based on a “wealth of new documents and interviews.” Please tell us about the research you did. What sort of new documents did you uncover, and what new interviews did you conduct?

A: Some of these were new documents I was able to find through additional research in Berlin, Moscow, and the United States. Some were new interviews with witnesses of the time—and the unearthing of interviews and oral histories that had previously received little notice. However, the real wealth of new material came from documents that had been released in all three countries that hadn't been brought together in a book that explained their meaning and their connections. Almost all of the most significant players from 1961 are no longer living; however their memoirs, oral histories, and documents recounting some of their most crucial meetings have either gone unnoticed or have attracted too little notice. Sadly, much of what we still need to know remains classified. But this book does make clear what we should be watching for most intensively when new documents are released, particularly those of President Kennedy's brother Robert.

Q: What surprised you most as you worked on the book, and what do you think will most surprise readers?

A: What most surprised me is the body of evidence that Kennedy not only was relieved by the Berlin border closure, but in many respects wrote the script for it. Reading the documents, I was also struck by how refreshingly self-aware Kennedy was about the failure of his first year as president and the danger that Khrushchev would consider him weak. On the Soviet side, what interested me most was the power of a weak client and his failing state, Walter Ulbricht and East Germany, to influence the actions of a great power. The greatest mystery to me remains the Georgi Bolshakov–Bobby Kennedy relationship, which I’m now confident played a larger role than can be documented.

Q: What do you want readers to get out of this book?

A: I want Americans to understand how the decisions of their presidents—then and now—shape world history in ways we don’t always understand at the time of a specific event. I want readers to know that Kennedy could have prevented the Berlin Wall, if he had wished, and that in acquiescing to the border closure he not only created a more dangerous situation—but also contributed to mortgaging the future for tens of millions of Central and Eastern Europeans.

The relatively small decisions that U.S. presidents make have huge, often global, consequences. Though most U.S. analysts and even historians have forgotten the events around Berlin in 1961, I want to start a debate about whether the U.S. actually could have ended the Cold War earlier. I also want to remind Americans of the cost to the world of perceived American weakness. Luckily, we escaped a nuclear conflict—both over Berlin and over Cuba—but the greatest danger came not because we overreached but because our adversary had concluded that we wouldn’t act to defend our interests.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Pablo Torrey:

Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information today can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even an issue. What people must be consider while those information which is in the former life are difficult to be find than now's taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you get it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen within you if you take Berlin 1961 as the daily resource information.

Jeffery Hall:

Reading a e-book can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world really likes. Do you like reading book thus. There are a lot of reasons why people love it. First reading a publication will give you a lot of new information. When you read a book you will get new information because book is one of various ways to share the information or their idea. Second, examining a book will make you actually more imaginative. When you looking at a book especially fictional works book the author will bring you to imagine the story how the people do it anything. Third, it is possible to share your knowledge to some others. When you read this Berlin 1961, you are able to tells your family, friends in addition to soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire the others, make them reading a guide.

Thomas Baxter:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Berlin 1961, you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Danica Johnson:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you is Berlin 1961 this book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some investigation when he makes this book. Here is why this book suitable all of you.

**Download and Read Online Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe
#Z852H97FI63**

Read Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe for online ebook

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe books to read online.

Online Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe ebook PDF download

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe Doc

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe Mobipocket

Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe EPub

Z852H97FI63: Berlin 1961 By Frederick Kempe