

Obama in Berlin



Barack Obama is dragging the U.S. into another war, and he will likely use his speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin today to put indirect pressure on Western allies to join in the cause. Even some of Obama's voters think that Syria looks too much like Iraq, with its non-existent weapons of mass destruction. Obama will no doubt seek to evoke a comparison with the "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech of John F. Kennedy 50 years ago. That historic speech is often interpreted falsely as an expression of resistance against the Soviets. As Frederick Kempe points out so well in *Berlin 1961*, the U.S. welcomed the erection of the wall and did little, if anything, to oppose it, although the U.S.'s post-war commitments required it to defend the entire city. Kennedy was an indecisive and weak leader, according to Kempe, but he was decisive in his willingness to sacrifice the people of East Berlin and Eastern Europe. Obama will of course put a completely different spin on it in Berlin today. Czech officials should keep the contradiction in mind when considering Syria.

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