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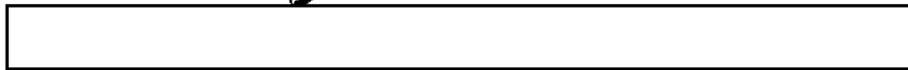
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1. SOVIET OFFICIAL DENIES CHANGE IN ALLIED STATUS IN EAST BERLIN

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[REDACTED]

A Soviet embassy protocol officer in Berlin told [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that the USSR intended to continue to respect Allied rights in

East Berlin and had no intention of tearing up any four-power agreement. He said nothing had changed as a result of Soviet commandant Dibrova's statement to the American commandant about the incident involving American congressmen. According to the officer, the Soviet-East German exchange of letters on 20 September merely formalized the existing situation and changed nothing about Allied access to Berlin or Allied movement in East Berlin.

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As proof that the situation is unchanged, the protocol officer said that East Berlin is still open to Allied vehicles and that Allied nationals who get in trouble with East German police are still turned over to Soviet authorities.

Comment

While East German propaganda continues to deny that the four-power status of Berlin still exists, it is becoming increasingly evident that Moscow is permitting East Germany to assert its authority only where this can be safely done without in fact curtailing Allied rights in Berlin. East German propaganda may have gone farther than the USSR intends in implying a threat to the Allied position in West Berlin.

2. EAST GERMANY MAY ASK PEIPING'S SUPPORT IN
GAINING ASIAN RECOGNITION

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A representative of the West German consul general in Hong Kong stated on 3 December that his government believed the chief purpose of East German premier Grotewohl's visit to Peiping is to enlist Communist China's aid in influencing neutralist Asian nations to recognize East Germany.

Comment

It is unlikely that Asian neutral nations will recognize East Germany at this time. However, the Soviet and Chinese Communists probably believe that the desire of these nations for international cooperation and contacts between governments "regardless of ideological differences" will eventually permit East Germany to gain recognition.

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4. MILITARY SITUATION IN LAOS

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Latest reports from Vientiane indicate that government forces in Sam Neua Province have at least temporarily gained the upper hand over attacking Pathet Lao troops. [redacted]

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[redacted] the three Pathet Lao battalions that attacked government positions in the southern part of the province are retreating northeastward. Pathet Lao objectives in the initial action were to seize high terrain that controlled government lines of communication into the province.

Government troops are now attempting to cut the line of retreat and to interdict the battalions' supply routes. Although action is still centered in the original area of attack, royal forces have already begun to implement a plan to attack Pathet Lao munitions depots in other areas, using small commando units. The action may provoke a strong Pathet Lao offensive and expand the area of hostilities. [redacted]

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5. COSTA RICA SEEKING OAS INVESTIGATION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN SITUATION

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[REDACTED] Costa Rican foreign minister Esquivel on 7 December asked the secretary general of the Organization of Central American States to sound out the other member governments on a request to the Organization of American States to investigate Nicaraguan charges of a Communist subversive plot in Central America.

Comment Costa Rica is evidently trying to seize the initiative from the rightist regimes of Nicaragua and Venezuela in the recently renewed "war of nerves" in the Caribbean area. In recent conversations with American officials, high Nicaraguan and Venezuelan officials have renewed their charges that Costa Rican president Figueres is a leader of an international conspiracy financed by the Soviet Union to overthrow anti-Communist governments in the area. Figueres in fact has a long anti-Communist record. However, he has an equally long record of active opposition to area "dictatorships," particularly those in Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Nicaraguan president Somoza is aware of current plotting against his regime by his domestic opponents and hopes to pin the blame on Figueres. The Figueres administration, on the other hand, gives credence to reports that preparations for a new "revolt" in Costa Rica, similar to that of last January, are under way in Venezuela and Nicaragua. At that time the OAS was instrumental in bringing an end to the fighting in Central America. [REDACTED]

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