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Western Europe: Radical Tactics Against INF Deployment

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An Intelligence Assessment

DIA review
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September 1983

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Western Europe: Radical Tactics Against INF Deployment

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by Office of Global Issues, and Office of European Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, European Issues Division, EURA,

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Western Europe: Radical Tactics Against INF Deployment

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 13 September 1983 was used in this report.

This report assesses the threat posed by antinuclear protest groups that intend to resist INF deployment by taking direct physical actions affecting US facilities or personnel in Western Europe. We also examine plans of "autonomous" and terrorist groups to undertake violent action intended to exploit anti-INF sentiment. The majority of West European "peace" groups, which are planning to rely on mass rallies and other peaceful protests to sway the public and exert pressure on Allied governments, are outside the scope of the paper. In addition, although five NATO countries are slated to base INF, we have limited our analysis to those with early deployment dates: West Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

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A minority of the antinuclear protest movement in Western Europe intends to go beyond mass demonstrations in efforts to prevent INF deployment this fall. Most of this minority contemplates peaceful methods of demonstrating opposition and will go no further than engaging in "human blockades" or sit-ins around prospective INF bases and other military installations. However, a small percentage of individuals from the loosely organized autonomous groups, such as the Anti-Imperialists in West Germany and the Self-Managed Leagues in Italy, probably will attempt to enter bases and sabotage equipment or occupy buildings. These efforts probably will be most intense in West Germany, although some are also likely in Italy and the United Kingdom.

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the most violence prone of the autonomous groups in West Germany probably will try to halt or attack munitions trains.

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Although the radical autonomous groups and the terrorists are more interested in exploiting the INF issue than in stopping INF deployment, we believe they pose a serious threat to the trains and possibly to other US interests.

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We estimate that the threat of terrorism connected with the anti-INF campaign is low in Italy. Police arrests have greatly weakened the Red Brigades; although they probably are still capable of carrying out armed attacks, thus far they have shown no discernible interest in the INF base preparations in Sicily.

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There are no indigenous terrorist groups in the United Kingdom that appear interested in undertaking anti-INF activity. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that foreign groups will try to commit terrorist acts, we consider this unlikely. 25X1

The immediate aims of all the radical groups discussed here are to provoke governments into using force against them so that they can use the rallying cry of "repression" and to promote confrontations with US forces in hopes of fanning anti-American sentiment. Most believe that either scenario would gain them greater popular support. 25X1

Available evidence indicates that the Soviets believe large demonstrations to be the most effective way of generating public pressure against INF deployments. After deployments begin, however, the Soviets might see greater advantage in encouraging more extreme anti-INF actions in order to delay and perhaps prevent full deployment and to increase the political costs to the basing countries. 25X1

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A "Hot Autumn?"

The debates among activists over tactics for the anti-INF campaign this fall reflect the "peace" movement's lack of unity and its growing attractiveness to fringe groups that covet its popular appeal. This is particularly true in West Germany, where coordination meetings during the summer have attracted an even broader assortment of activists than usual. meetings aimed at organizing the major demonstrations have been dominated by Communist parties and their front organizations, ecologists, and in some cases center-left parties and trade unions—groups that believe more direct action could alienate the public. These groups, which numerically are very small compared with the "traditional" wing of the movement, reject further "do-nothing" demonstrations as a waste of time.

West German and Italian autonomous groups, having failed to make their point of view prevail over that of the larger peace groups, had begun meeting on their own. The autonomous groups easily reached a consensus in favor of "direct action," but even among them interpretations of the term varied widely. some of the autonomous groups favor passive resistance such as human blockades of military bases. In our judgment, they will be joined at times in this type of activity by some in the "traditional" wing, notably Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament activists in the United Kingdom and the Greens in West Germany. A portion of the movement's autonomous wing, however, plans more vigorous action, which could include violence as well as blockades.

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In West Germany, terrorist groups, particularly the Red Army Faction (RAF), have become increasingly involved this year in the anti-INF campaign. RAF supporters have consistently participated in meetings of the radical left to plan direct actions. We believe that terrorists and the more radical autonomous groups differ from a majority of the peace movement in that they care little about INF itself; rather, they see the campaign as an opportunity to strike against military and political institutions and to wage war against US "imperialism." Moreover, the RAF may view the INF issue as an opportunity to regain its preeminence in West Germany's violence-prone radical left.

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All of the more radical protest groups—from the strong pacifists through the violent terrorist sects—hope in one way or another to provoke security forces into taking tough retaliatory measures that could raise the specter of a "repressive state." Based on conversations between US diplomats and government officials in these countries, however, we believe that the governments understand the challenges posed by such tactics and are well prepared to deal with them judiciously.

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Some of the radical groups probably also hope that the violence they instigate will spread to the larger protest movement and cause massive public order problems. Prolonged, large-scale rioting in our judgment could indeed prompt affected governments to reconsider their commitments to INF deployment. The firm emphasis of most "peace" groups on orderly demonstrations, however, makes this an unlikely scenario, even in West Germany.

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Possible Actions Against US Interests in West Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom

Tactic	Country [a]	Group Involved	Estimated Frequency
Human blockades, sit-ins, and so forth	West Germany, United Kingdom, Italy	Major protest groups; many smaller groups	Frequent
Enter US bases	West Germany, United Kingdom, Italy	"Autonomous" groups or radical pacifists	Sporadic
Occupy buildings on US bases, and so forth	United Kingdom, Italy, West Germany	"Autonomous" groups or radical pacifists	Rare
Damage military equipment	West Germany, United Kingdom, Italy	"Autonomous" groups or radical pacifists	Sporadic
Disrupt military maneuvers	West Germany, United Kingdom, Italy	"Autonomous" groups or radical pacifists	Sporadic
Actions against munitions trains	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	
Block tracks with people	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Sporadic
Block tracks with objects	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Sporadic
Set fires on tracks	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Rare
Tamper with rails, switches, tunnels, bridges, and so forth	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Rare
Short out, cut power lines	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Rare
Throw objects or paint	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Sporadic
Armed attacks; bombs	West Germany	Red Army Faction; Revolutionary Cells	Rare
Actions against waterborne munitions	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	
Stretch cables in path	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Rare
Block with boats	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Rare
Throw objects, paint, and so forth	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Sporadic
Actions against munitions trucks (undetermined)	West Germany	Autonomous groups; some terrorists (RAF)	Unknown
Disrupt flight patterns (balloons with tinfoil)	West Germany	Autonomous groups or radical pacifists	Sporadic

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Possible Actions Against US Interests in West Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (continued)

Tactic	Country [a]	Group Involved	Estimated Frequency
Incite riots	West Germany, Italy	Autonomous groups or terrorists	Rare
Bombs at US installations	West Germany, Italy	RAF, Revolutionary Cells in West Germany; Red Brigades in Italy	Sporadic in West Germany; rare in Italy
Bombs in US housing, cars, and so forth	West Germany, Italy	RAF, Revolutionary Cells in West Germany; Red Brigades in Italy	Sporadic in West Germany; rare in Italy
Attempts to kidnap US personnel	Italy	Red Brigades	Rare
Attempts to penetrate nuclear weapons storage	West Germany	RAF (?)	No indications

[a] Those countries where there is a history of such actions or where they are known to be under consideration.

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West Germany

The elaborate anti-INF preparations during the summer leave little doubt that protest actions will be numerous and vigorous in West Germany this fall. Strong disagreements over tactics and long-range goals almost certainly will exacerbate the tensions that flare up periodically among the hundreds of protest groups, but we do not believe that this will prevent a high level of agitation throughout the autumn. Indeed, the resulting mix of protest actions might be the most effective one possible for the anti-INF forces as they seek to put pressure on the government and provoke unpopular overreactions by security forces.

The most intense protest activity probably will occur during 16-22 October, culminating in four large demonstrations on 22 October, the beginning of UN Disarmament Week. The planned actions represent an uneasy compromise among the movement's various factions. "Traditional" groups like the Social Democrats, the Moscow-controlled members of the German Communist Party (DKP) and its front organizations, and trade union representatives favored a single mass rally on the model of the Bonn demonstrations in October 1981 and June 1982. But autonomous groups—which have gained greater prominence in recent months—criticized what they termed the conservative strategy of the larger organizations and advocated numerous local demonstrations, locally controlled. 25X1

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the autonomous groups constitute a small fraction of the overall protest movement. Some of them are religiously oriented and have created "peace camps" to train activists in nonviolent protest techniques. As discussed below, however, some autonomous groups such as the Anti-Imperialists and the Krieg dem Krieg are discussing sabotage, riots, and even armed attacks on the assumption that the West German state and NATO are now vulnerable. In our judgment, the decreasing leverage of larger peace organizations over the autonomous groups increases somewhat the likelihood that at least one demonstration will give way to rioting, and makes attempts at sabotage a near certainty. 25X1

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Leaders of the Green Party, caught between the traditional wing of the peace movement and the advocates of more vigorous action, have vacillated over their role in the fall activities. Petra Kelly's denunciation of the violence when Vice President Bush visited Krefeld in June demonstrated the oft-repeated concern of prominent Greens that disorders could bring their party into disrepute. Most of the party's prominent personalities seem to prefer symbolic passive resistance, but we believe that some—and a large proportion of party members—will take part in direct actions calculated to have a high nuisance effect.

Human blockades are likely to constitute the most common tactic by those who want to carry their opposition beyond attendance at rallies. According to many statements in the press, most of these individuals plan to sit, stand, or lie in roads serving military bases. They hope to hinder INF deployment by preventing workers and materiel from entering the bases, and to influence public opinion by calling attention to what they term "militaristic activity" in West Germany. Blockade attempts are likely to occur most frequently around INF sites and at major US military facilities, but some groups—especially those actively opposed to US policy in Central America—probably will conduct sporadic blockades of the US Embassy and its consulates.

Terrorists and Potential Terrorists

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representatives from several terrorist and extreme autonomous groups have met frequently in various West German cities to discuss plans for the disruption of US munitions transports and other direct actions this fall. The variety of groups represented and the varying locations of these meetings suggest that the radical left is carefully planning and coordinating an antimilitary campaign.

The Red Army Faction (RAF). Members of this RAF support network have reportedly been involved in preparations for the anti-INF campaign since early 1983, possibly including preparations for armed attacks. Based on fliers circulating in the Frankfurt area in June 1983, we believe that RAF supporters were behind the Krefeld riots in June. Moreover, we believe that the RAF was responsible for the bombing of the Hahn Air Base Officers' Club in August. 25X1

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We believe that the presence of this group in the country may indicate an intention to undertake an anti-INF campaign. Because the hard-core is well trained and prepared to use violence, we believe that its involvement in the campaign represents a significant threat to US military installations and transportation. 25X1

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The Revolutionary Cells (RZ). RZ members have participated in preparations for the anti-INF campaign. Given their traditional opposition to the US and NATO presence and their past successes in attacking US military installations, we believe that the RZ represent a threat to US interests, particularly in the Frankfurt area, where they have been most active in the past. 25X1

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Violence-Prone "Autonomous" Groups. The most volatile autonomous groups have been heavily involved in the effort to stop munitions transport activities, which they have increasingly linked to INF deployment. According to US military authorities, the Bremen-based group Krieg dem Krieg has conducted extensive surveillance of US munitions shipments from port to depot since at least the spring of 1982. The head of one of West Germany's security agencies recently said on television that radical elements had compiled precise timetables of US munitions trains. He noted that radical groups have formed a coordinating committee to plan disruptions of transports and that there are indications that terrorists might be involved in shooting or bomb attacks.

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Violent Groups in West Germany

The Red Army Faction (RAF)
Formerly known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, the RAF has been West Germany's most notorious terrorist group since its formation in the late 1960s. Its major objectives have always been to wage war against the West German state and US "imperialism." In 1982 the West Germans arrested three key activists and uncovered 13 caches of weapons, supplies, and money. We believe the loss of the caches has reduced the group's capabilities to carry out acts of violence, [redacted]

The Revolutionary Cells (RZ)
The RZ is responsible for the greatest number of attacks on US military installations, but no Americans have been killed because the group has carried out bombings at hours when few people have been present. Counterterrorist operations against the RZ have been largely unsuccessful [redacted] *Moreover, RZ members apparently lead normal lives during the week, committing terrorist acts at night or on weekends, and thus are not subject to many of the psychological strains underground groups usually face.* [redacted] 25X1

The Violence-Prone "Autonomous" Groups
The autonomous groups are loose amalgamations of leftists, radicals, and militants, often with no coherent political philosophy but organized to oppose nuclear energy, INF deployment, or US "imperialism." Information on these groups is fragmentary, [redacted] *While the West German police do not usually refer to them as terrorists, some may undertake actions this fall that could place them in that category.* [redacted] 25X1

Tactics and Targets
We suspect that the incidents this summer at Krefeld and at Hahn and Ramstein Air Bases provide a blueprint for some of the actions likely to take place this fall. The tactics used in each incident were apparently planned and coordinated among radical groups. We believe that RAF supporters spearheaded the actions at Krefeld and Hahn, but used tactics usually associated with the RZ. US military authorities have suggested that the events probably were "training exercises" for future actions by extremist groups. [redacted]

Krefeld. The Krefeld riots demonstrated the ability of radical groups to infiltrate a peaceful demonstration. Careful planning ensured the participation of extremists from all parts of West Germany. According to the press, the militants had arranged to have helmets and weapons sent into Krefeld before their arrival, in anticipation that cars and suitcases would be searched by police. Fliers circulating in the Frankfurt area indicated that RAF supporters provided the leadership for the militant actions, and we believe that their tactics included breaking up into small groups to create as much damage as possible. Although there is disagreement among West German authorities over what happened in Krefeld, small group tactics, in our view, were effectively used to create chaos in the streets. After this incident, a spokesman for the radical left openly called for actions against INF to be undertaken in the manner of the RZ, that is, in small groups, because "it is a more effective way of engaging in violence." We believe that radicals are likely to use diversionary tactics this fall to encourage the spread of "spontaneous" violence and to mask the source of violence. [redacted] 25X1

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Hahn Air Base. We have tentatively linked the bombing of the Officers' Club at Hahn on 7 August to RAF supporters attending a nearby "peace camp" who had penetrated the base only a week earlier. We believe it likely that some of the peace camps that were held throughout Germany this summer may have provided training in violent tactics.

Ramstein Air Base. Demonstrations during the open house at Ramstein on 7 August, though free of violence, included a tactic designed to damage the image of US personnel. Media coverage focused on the arrests of demonstrators by US security forces, with commentaries in some cases suggesting "brutality" on the part of the US military. According to the West German press, many of the demonstrators deliberately provoked the arrests and coordinated television coverage to portray the INF deployments as a US–West German confrontation, rather than a joint NATO undertaking. We believe that this tactic is likely to be used by extremist groups this fall in an attempt to provoke overreaction by the authorities. US military authorities are concerned that direct contact between soldiers and demonstrators enhances the opportunity for such a situation.

Munitions Transport. Because of the extensive US military presence, we believe that installations and transports in the Frankfurt area are likely targets for radical actions.

Blockades of railroad tracks, particularly the stretch from Bremerhaven to Bremen, and of the port at Nordenham, are likely tactics this fall. Because the RAF may be involved, assaults on the trains or ships cannot be ruled out.

Italy

Despite signs of greater interest on the part of labor and church-related groups, "peace" activity in Italy remains highly dependent on the efforts of political parties—especially the Communist Party (PCI). A nonpartisan organization called the National Coordination of Peace Committees has been formed but has little independent influence; we believe that the size of demonstrations still depends on whether the PCI chooses to mobilize its supporters. 25X1

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The infrequency of demonstrations in large cities and the refusal of Communist-affiliated protesters around Comiso, Sicily, to undertake "direct actions" against the prospective INF base reflect this relatively cautious policy. 25X1

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Activities at Comiso 25X1

Despite the PCI's caution, Comiso probably will be the site of most direct actions protesting against INF. 25X1

Protesters have maintained a constant presence near the prospective cruise missile base at the Magliocco Airport. As accounts in the press make clear, these protesters can be divided roughly into three categories: a PCI-dominated group called CUDIP; an International Peace Camp composed largely of non-Italians; and an assortment of Italian autonomous and anarchist groups that show up in the town periodically. During the past year the Sicilian press has noted that CUDIP and the International Camp have purchased separate plots of land adjoining the base. 25X1

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Relations among these groups have been strained by disagreements over tactics ever since they began their activities at Comiso more than a year ago. Activists in the International Camp have long criticized CUDIP for being too concerned about partisan politics and for 25X1

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trying to restrain the camp's attempts at civil disobedience. The two groups have tried to harmonize their activities by forming a coordination group called the International Meeting Against Cruise Missiles, but State Department reporting suggests that this has only transferred conflict to another forum.

Tensions among protesters have been exacerbated by the intermittent presence of autonomous and anarchist groups such as the Self-Managed Leagues. Their rowdy activities, including scuffles with the police, have at times drawn in members of the peace camp. On several occasions during the past year, hundreds of demonstrators from the peace camp, the autonomous groups, or both have blockaded the gates to the airport, resulting in some lost work time on the INF facility. Some activists have succeeded in entering the base by climbing or cutting through the fence. We believe continued demonstrations and sit-ins around the airport are virtually certain this fall.

Unless the autonomous groups are forced to leave the Comiso area because of lack of money or adequate facilities, we believe melees are likely in which the police will be prepared to respond, as they have in the past, with tear gas and clubs. Even if the autonomous groups depart, blockades are almost certain to occur again, possibly resulting in work stoppages of several days at a time. Moreover, activists may again penetrate the perimeter and damage base facilities.

Although protest groups recently have shown little interest in direct actions on the Italian mainland, the US military base at Vicenza near Venice and other US facilities may also be the objects of brief blockades or sabotage attempts. Any groups intending such action will be able to use a detailed guide to the workings of US bases, nuclear storage, and other matters published last July by the Radical Party—an unorthodox political party that strongly opposes INF.

Local officials in Sicily last May said that they saw little threat of terrorism at Comiso. Other Italian authorities have noted, however, that the autonomous groups are traditional spawning grounds for terrorists. While we do not exclude the possibility of a terrorist attack against the Comiso base or US personnel in Sicily, we estimate the threat currently to be small. For instance, there have been no reports of activity by the Red Brigades keyed to the INF issue in Sicily. Moreover, the Brigades have been weakened in recent years, and, although they probably are still capable of carrying out armed attacks, we believe that Comiso is not high on their list of likely targets. 25X1 25X1

United Kingdom

The disarmament campaign in the United Kingdom has experienced a series of setbacks during the past few months, highlighted by Prime Minister Thatcher's victory in the general elections in June, declining crowds at protest activities, and public opinion surveys indicating a gradual increase in support for INF deployment. Protesters in the United Kingdom have been both less virulent and less inventive than their counterparts in West Germany, and thus far local and national authorities have effectively countered their activities. Nevertheless, the British Government anticipates that as the key dates for INF deployment approach, protests organized by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) may regain momentum. 25X1 25X1

In addition to traditional peace demonstrations, we believe that the approaching INF deployments will stimulate hardcore activist groups to take more effective action than their recent unsuccessful attempts to blockade US Air Force bases. CND now is committed to using nonviolent direct action to oppose deployments. This will primarily involve efforts by demonstrators to blockade military facilities with their bodies. Greenham Common, where INF are to be based, will be the main focus of activity, but other bases where nuclear weapons are stored probably will also draw protests. Although would-be blockaders have shown considerable tenacity in the past and have even caused work slowdowns at Greenham Common, British authorities appear confident that they can meet this challenge firmly and judiciously. 25X1 25X1

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Some antinuclear radicals have in the past interpreted direct action in a more aggressive manner. Last April a handful of activists scaled a fence at Upper Heyford and reached a shelter where F-111 aircraft were housed. In July a few militants from the women's peace camp at Greenham Common penetrated a fence and reached an SR-71 aircraft, which they damaged with paint. On another occasion protesters using sledge hammers knocked down several hundred yards of fence.

These modest successes may encourage militants—especially in the women's camp, which continues to dominate the Greenham Common scene—to try again. If they cannot reach INF equipment or aircraft, they may try to occupy an office. We believe that an important aim of the more radical protesters will be to provoke a confrontation with US security personnel. Given the large circumference of the perimeters, security forces may not be able to forestall all penetration attempts, and some work time may be lost as a result. Nevertheless, the chance that protestors would create an incident that would bolster their cause appears to be small.

We have received no reporting suggesting terrorist actions in conjunction with the anti-INF campaign in the United Kingdom. While we cannot rule out the possibility of terrorism by foreign groups, there are no indigenous terrorist groups that appear interested in anti-INF activity.

The Soviet Perspective

We believe the Soviets see little chance that the West German, British, or Italian Government will back away from INF deployment, but they are nevertheless continuing their strenuous efforts to thwart it. They have intensified efforts to sway non-Communist groups through political persuasion, continued to subsidize local Communist parties and fronts for purposes of "peace" activity, and undertaken a wide variety of active measures.

Thus far, we have no evidence that the Soviets are funding or providing other support to radical groups planning sabotage or other violent acts. Communists in peace movement meetings have emphasized mass demonstrations more than civil disobedience and have argued against violence. This may reflect a Soviet judgment that public pressure on governments is their best weapon, and that such pressure can only be produced by a "respectable" peace movement. On the other hand, any covert Soviet support for violent groups would be difficult to detect. Once deployment begins, moreover, we judge that the Soviets will continue to support the peace movement but will also welcome—if not encourage—violent or harassing acts in hopes of slowing and perhaps preventing full deployment while raising the domestic political costs to the basing governments.

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Longer Term Prospects

After the tense period this fall, we expect the overall volume of antinuclear protest activity in Western Europe to diminish unless there is another major controversy involving US nuclear weapons. The reduction in strength probably will be even more pronounced if relatively small groups create disorder and violence this fall. The most militant activists, however, probably will be the last to abandon their efforts. Thus, while demonstrations in urban areas may become smaller, harassment at US facilities probably will diminish more slowly over the next year. Blockades, vigils, and similar activities are likely to crop up periodically, while sporadic attempts at illegal entry or sabotage will pose a constant threat, especially in West Germany.

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Despite the personnel constraints which the RAF is currently experiencing, a new generation of terrorists could emerge from the fall campaign. At a minimum, we would expect the RAF and the RZ to continue intermittent operations against US targets even after the INF issue subsides. Their efforts, however, would be less likely to be keyed to that particular issue.

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