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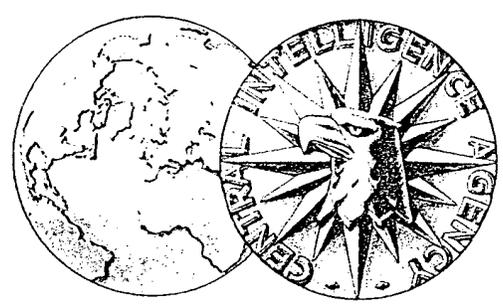
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POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM EAST GERMANY IN 1950

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POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM EAST GERMANY IN 1950

SUMMARY

The possibility of a complete Soviet troop withdrawal from East Germany in 1950, although it cannot be entirely discounted, is slight. The USSR may, however, consider-

ably reduce its East German occupation force in 1950 and propagandize the reduction as the first step toward complete withdrawal of its troops from the area.

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It contains information available to CIA as of 18 January 1950.

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In an attempt to increase the prestige of the new East German Government, the USSR has granted it diplomatic recognition, permitted the passage of a general Nazi amnesty law, and promised early return of all Soviet-held German prisoners of war. As intimated by German Communist propaganda at the time of the creation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Kremlin might undertake a more decisive move: the unilateral withdrawal of its troops from East Germany.*

The Soviet Union would obtain certain advantages from a complete troop withdrawal. This action, ostensibly the result of negotiations with the Pieck Government, would raise the prestige of the GDR and might result in gradual West German pressure for a withdrawal of Western troops from Germany. It would relieve the USSR of direct responsibility for GDR police state tactics, would eliminate the "contamination" to which Soviet troops are subject in East Germany, and could be exploited by Soviet propaganda as proof of the USSR's "peaceful intentions."

The principal advantages to the USSR of a complete troop withdrawal do not, however, outweigh its principal disadvantage—the weakening of Soviet control in East Germany. The USSR does not now have a control apparatus within the East German State adequate in itself to insure continued Communist control. The USSR might be able during 1950 to improve its present control apparatus to a point of security where (in combination with

* A Soviet decision to effect a troop withdrawal is not believed to be dependent on a prior peace treaty between the USSR and the GDR.

the capabilities of its troops in Poland to lend moral and, if need be, timely physical support) it could safely effect a complete troop withdrawal. However, such a security combination in an area as important as East Germany is not likely to satisfy the Soviet Union's extreme security consciousness. Furthermore, if re-entry of Soviet troops into East Germany to support the Communist regime became necessary, the result would be to destroy quickly and effectively the advantages of the original withdrawal and simultaneously to expose the true status of the GDR. Therefore it is more likely that the USSR would consider a well-tested security apparatus, possessing a very high capability of control without outside military assistance, indispensable to complete troop withdrawal. In view of the above considerations, the possibility of a complete troop withdrawal in 1950 appears slight.

On the other hand, the appointment of Soviet Marshal Rokossovsky as Polish Defense Minister and the current Soviet effort to expand East German paramilitary forces, which are probably preparatory measures for an eventual complete troop withdrawal from East Germany, may foreshadow a reduction of the Soviet occupation force in 1950. The USSR can considerably reduce its present occupation force of 375,000 without endangering Communist control and, by calling this reduction the first step in complete troop withdrawal, could gain a favorable propaganda theme. Because many of the units withdrawn would probably be redeployed to Poland, a partial withdrawal would not fundamentally change the offensive or defensive capabilities of the USSR in the area.

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General

4. We suggest that, in addition to the factors considered in this report, Soviet airfield construction in Eastern Germany is not to be reconciled with a full-scale withdrawal.

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