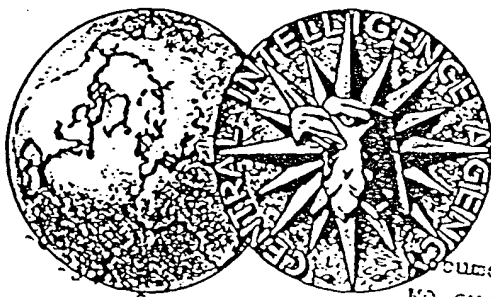


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# POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM GERMANY BEFORE SUMMER OF 1949

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM GERMANY  
BEFORE SUMMER OF 1949

SUMMARY

The USSR may, before the summer of 1949, propose some form of troop withdrawal from Germany, probably in conjunction with proposals regarding a German peace treaty. Under no circumstances, however, will the USSR withdraw completely during this period. In evacuating its troops from Germany, the USSR would probably remove its military formations, but would leave behind sufficient military and civilian personnel to ensure continued Communist control over the political, economic, and military establishments in eastern Germany.

A Soviet proposal to evacuate Germany would take one of three forms: a quadripartite withdrawal of all occupation forces; a unilateral withdrawal from the eastern zone; or a quadripartite withdrawal from Berlin. The first proposal, which would represent Soviet preference, might be made even though the Kremlin estimated Western acceptance to be improbable at the present time. This proposal might be issued by either the Kremlin or by an east German government. The second course would have certain advantages for the USSR, although the conditions essential for its implementation probably could not be fulfilled before summer 1949. The third proposal might be made in a final attempt to get the Western Powers out of Berlin, a prerequisite to course two.

An official Soviet proposal to withdraw all troops from Germany could be exploited with limited success as propaganda, particularly in Germany, in an attempt to force eventual Western withdrawal from Germany. Originating as a request from an east German government, its propaganda value might be greater. An official Soviet proposal for quadripartite troop withdrawal from Berlin would have similar but less forceful propaganda effects. An official Soviet declaration of intention to withdraw its troops unilaterally from eastern Germany would be played up as part of a Soviet "peace offensive" and would have some effect throughout Germany. This effect would be partly offset by unfavorable reactions in certain of the satellite states, and by a decline in indigenous support of local Communist parties in Western Europe, because of a fear of German resurgence.

The USSR will continue to advocate unofficially a quadripartite withdrawal from Germany. It is probable that the Kremlin, either itself or through an east German government, will make an official proposal for quadripartite evacuation of either Germany as a whole or of Berlin in order to: (1) induce continuance of international negotiations, notably concerning Germany; and (2) make propaganda. It is possible that

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report.

The information herein is as of 10 January 1949.

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the USSR will announce its intention to withdraw its troops from the eastern zone of Germany but would not be prepared to implement the announcement before it has consolidated its position in that area.

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POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM GERMANY  
BEFORE SUMMER OF 1949

1. QUADRIPARTITE TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL GERMANY.

a. *General Statement.*

The USSR, through various media including the Warsaw Conference, the Stalin-Wallace letter, the Soviet-controlled German press, and other quasi-official Soviet sources, has already advocated a quadripartite withdrawal of occupation troops from Germany. The Soviet Government may either propose directly to the Western Powers such a withdrawal in the near future, or may inspire an east German government request for such an evacuation. Such a request would probably be made in conjunction with a Soviet request for resumption of treaty negotiations. CIA believes that the Kremlin would count on rejection of such a proposal by the Western Powers and that the proposal would therefore be made solely for propaganda reasons.

b. *Advantages to the USSR of the Proposal.*

(1) Combined with an appeal to German national unity, the proposal would have some propaganda effect throughout Germany. Furthermore, the proposal could be capitalized upon by pro-Communist elements throughout the non-Soviet world as a proof of Soviet peaceful intentions.

(2) Rather than make the proposal itself, the USSR may direct a future east German government to originate the proposal. The Kremlin could then announce its willingness to comply with the request, provided the Western Powers were also agreeable to the proposal. By this tactic the USSR might hope to improve its own propaganda position, particularly in Germany, and also lend increased prestige to an east German government.

c. *Disadvantages to the USSR of the Proposal.*

(1) The proposal would have a generally unfavorable reception in the countries of Western Europe and in the satellite states because of their continuing fear of a restoration of German military power. Moreover, most Western Europeans and certain elements in Germany would view unfavorably the withdrawal of Western troops, particularly US, at this time. The unpopularity of the proposal would be mitigated to the extent that it was recognized as a propaganda move which the USSR realized would not be implemented.

(2) It would reduce the appeal of Western European Communist parties in countries where nationalist tendencies and the fear of Germany exist.

2. UNILATERAL TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM EASTERN GERMANY (INCLUDING THE SOVIET SECTOR OF BERLIN).

a. *General Statement.*

It is possible that the Soviet Government might officially announce now, and actually carry out later a unilateral troop withdrawal from eastern Germany; the lat-

ter is unlikely until Communist control of eastern Germany has been consolidated. In withdrawing, the USSR would leave behind sufficient civilian and disguised military personnel to ensure Communist control.

*b. Advantages to the USSR of Announcement.*

(1) This proposal would be of value in a Soviet-led "peace offensive" designed to discourage western preparedness and ultimately to promote US retirement from Europe.

*c. Disadvantages to the USSR of Announcement.*

(1) It would arouse an unfavorable reaction among the satellite states, and possibly would tend to undermine the appeal of the Communist parties of Western Europe.

*d. Estimate of Preliminary Conditions without Which Any Actual Troop Withdrawal Would Not Be Made.*

(1) Until the USSR had perfected the Communist control mechanism in eastern Germany it would not withdraw its troops. It is not believed that such a mechanism could be prepared before summer 1949, or that the USSR would be willing to withdraw all its troops without first satisfying itself of the reliability of this mechanism. This could be effected by gradual troop and military government withdrawal, giving the German Communists increasing authority on a trial basis. Although the USSR might evacuate its military formations, it would have to leave behind so many of its nationals to ensure continued Communist control over the political, economic, and military establishments in eastern Germany, and to ensure the maintenance of a "democratic state" in the Soviet sense, that the withdrawal would be only nominal.

(2) Before withdrawing, the USSR would probably have to secure a western evacuation of Berlin.

(3) Before withdrawing, the USSR would have to recognize an eastern German government.

*e. Advantages to the USSR of an Actual Unilateral Troop Withdrawal.*

(1) Unilateral withdrawal of Soviet troops would lend increased prestige to the Communist government of eastern Germany. This would occur despite the unpopularity of the regime.

(2) An evacuation of the eastern zone would be more in line with Soviet policy, which favors indirect rather than direct control.

(3) It would disassociate the USSR from direct responsibility for the police state tactics which German Communists would employ in Sovietizing eastern Germany or in attempting to penetrate western Germany.

(4) Withdrawal would eliminate the "contamination" to which Soviet forces are subjected to eastern Germany, and relieve the USSR of direct blame for the hardships and frustrations suffered by the Germans in the eastern zone.

(5) Such a move would have a strong propaganda appeal to German unity sentiment and would serve to increase German pressure for withdrawal of the Western Powers from Germany.

f. *Disadvantages to the USSR of an Actual Unilateral Troop Withdrawal.*

(1) Unilateral withdrawal of Soviet troops from eastern Germany would result in the loss of an advance military base.

(2) It would entail a reorganization of Soviet economic relations with eastern Germany, probably resulting in general weakening of Soviet economic controls in the area.

(3) It would also endanger Communist political control over east Germany and encourage popular unrest.

(4) It would reduce the Soviet bargaining position to the extent that that position is based on the military occupation of eastern Germany.

(5) It would facilitate penetration by the Western Powers of eastern Germany through propaganda, subversion, and espionage.

(6) It would have unfavorable effects in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

(7) It would deprive Soviet "Line of Communications" troops of their legal reason for being there.

3. **QUADRIPARTITE TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM BERLIN.**

A proposal for quadripartite withdrawal of troops from Berlin might be made at any time by the Kremlin, by the east Berlin administration, or later by an east German government. The effectiveness of the proposal would be essentially the same in either case. The USSR would be prepared to withdraw almost immediately and could do so with a minimum of preparation and with comparative ease. The proposal would be made, however, purely for propaganda purposes in the realization that the Western Powers would not accept. A four-power withdrawal from Berlin would inevitably lead to a Communist absorption of the entire city by economic pressure and by strong-armed Communist tactics. This, in turn, would enable the USSR to prepare for an eventual troop withdrawal from the Soviet zone.

4. **CONCLUSIONS.**

The USSR will continue to advocate unofficially quadripartite withdrawal from Germany. It is probable that the Kremlin will make an official proposal for quadripartite evacuation of either Germany as a whole or of Berlin in order to: (1) induce continuance of international negotiations on Germany; and (2) exploit the propaganda advantages indicated above.

Under no circumstances will the USSR withdraw completely from Germany. It is nevertheless possible that the USSR may announce its intention to withdraw unilaterally its troops from Germany. Such an announcement would be made only after a Soviet proposal, or a Soviet-sponsored east German request for quadripartite withdrawal, had been rejected by the Western Powers. The USSR probably will not withdraw its troops from Germany until it has fully consolidated its position in eastern Germany through the establishment of an east German government and through the provision of strong and reliable Communist security forces.

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The USSR will not be able to complete such a consolidation before the summer of 1949. After this time the USSR will be in a better position to effect a withdrawal of its troops without substantially weakening Soviet control in east Germany. The prospect of such an evacuation therefore becomes correspondingly greater after the summer of 1949.

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