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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY
13 November 1958

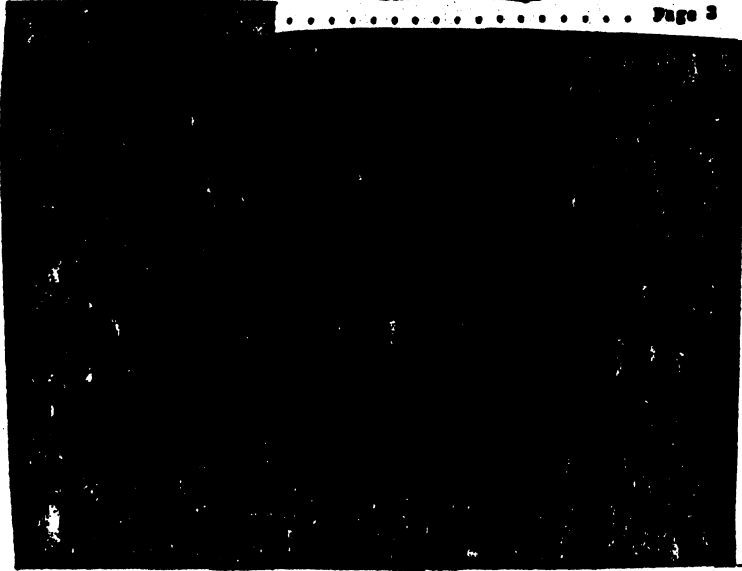
THE WEEK IN BRIEF

PART I
OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

USSR THREATENS WESTERN POSITION IN BERLIN Page 1

Khrushchev's threat on 10 November to "revise" the international status of Berlin presages a period of mounting tension in Germany during which the USSR will probably take steps to transfer to the East German regime Soviet authority in Berlin derived from quadripartite agreements. A new juridical basis for the presence of Soviet troops in East Germany would be established. These actions would be designed to force the West to deal with the Ulbricht regime in order to maintain Western access to Berlin. Bonn has hinted it might consider severing relations with Moscow if the USSR should abrogate the four-power agreement on Berlin.

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12 November 1958

PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

USSR THREATENS WESTERN POSITION IN BERLIN

Khrushchev's threats on 10 November to "revise" the international status of Berlin preface a period of mounting tension in Germany. During this period the USSR will probably take a series of steps to transfer to the East German regime Soviet authority in Berlin derived from quadripartite agreements. A new juridical basis for the presence of Soviet troops in East Germany would be established.

Khrushchev declared that the Western powers, by violating the "Potsdam Agreement"—notably by sanctioning the remilitarization of West Germany—had forfeited their right to remain in West Berlin, and he indicated that the USSR would hand over its remaining functions to East Germany. He further declared that any attack on East Germany would be considered an attack on the USSR itself. He gave no indication, however, of how or when the USSR planned to hand over its functions. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko on 11 November said this would not happen immediately but would not be long delayed. Further, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official informed American Ambassador Thompson that German problems should be dealt with on a step-by-step basis.

The Soviet actions would be designed to enhance East German sovereignty, thus underlining the Soviet contention that there are two Germanies and, by invoking the threat of a blockade, to force the West to deal with the Ulbricht regime. A broader purpose may be to fur-

ther increase world tension with a "western Quency" in order to strengthen bloc unity against the common enemy and to block West German attempts to establish normal relations with the East European countries, particularly Poland. Further, the



move is designed to undercut forthcoming West German proposals regarding a four-power conference on German reunification.

Moscow's move at this time will strengthen the hand of the Ulbricht regime against popular unrest stemming from the sudden

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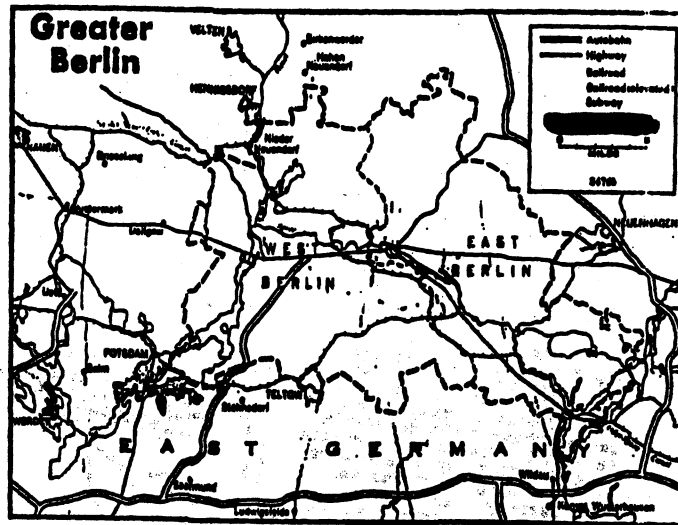
OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

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change in over-all policy from a "hard line" to one of concessions to certain elements of the populace. As a result of concessions to physicians, industrial workers were considering work slowdowns to pressure the regime into improving their own conditions.

Moreover, the flow of refugees to the West, although somewhat reduced, has continued. During October, more than 19,000 East Germans, including many intellectuals and technicians, fled to the West, approximately 75 percent through West Berlin. A sealing off of West Berlin would thus greatly diminish refugee losses.

In a press conference on 12 November, East German Premier Grotewohl, referring to the possibility of a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Germany, stated that he understood Khrushchev's speech raised such a possibility, "naturally" on the premise that the other powers took the same steps. This suggests that East German officials may depart for Moscow in the near future to negotiate a new agreement along these lines, perhaps after the forthcoming elections of 16 November, as reported by a fairly reliable source.

Moscow might transfer its membership in the Berlin Air

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Safety Center to the East Germans, thus confronting the West with a situation in which it would be required either to deal with East German officials or fly without guarantees of safety. However, the East Germans are not now believed to be in a position to exert effective control of flights in the corridor and they apparently do not possess the trained personnel to take over all the Soviet positions at this time.

West German officials believe that Khrushchev's speech is aimed at testing the firmness of the Western resolve to remain in Berlin and at exerting pressure on German public opinion to accept direct political talks with East Germany. French and British foreign affairs officials have strongly rejected any unilateral abrogation of the Potsdam Agreement, and the West German press chief on 13 November hinted that Bonn might consider severing its relations

with Moscow if the USSR abrogated the four-power status of Berlin.

Increased harassment of West Berlin and Allied and West German access to it is now likely. Various measures to inhibit traffic on the lifeline to Berlin could be taken by the USSR or East Germany, and the East Germans could move to seal off West Berlin by imposing border restrictions and halting municipal transport. Although West Berlin municipal officials report that there is no indication of public disquiet in the city, they feel that acceptance of East German control over highway access to Berlin would be an "intolerable situation." British officials in Berlin, however, warn of the danger of a "self-imposed" blockade if the Western powers refuse to accept East German control over access to Berlin.

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