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1. USSR TO TRANSFER VISA AUTHORITY
TO EAST GERMANY

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The German Democratic Republic is to have complete visa authority by 1 January 1958 over American, British, and French nationals--official as

well as nonofficial--entering or crossing East Germany except "troop personnel and materials" of the Allied Berlin garrisons. This decision was reached during talks between East German officials in Berlin and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin from 25 to 28 November, according to a report believed credible by the American mission in Berlin.

Personnel of the Western embassies in Warsaw and Moscow who normally cross East Germany traveling to and from their posts would be directly affected by this procedure, as would the personnel attached to Allied military missions in Potsdam. Additionally, a narrow definition of "troop personnel" could be used to compel Allied civilian officials traveling between the Federal Republic and West Berlin to accept documentation and processing by East German rather than Russian officials.

Enforcement of such visa requirements would not only establish a precedent for further restrictions on Allied travel in East Germany but would also strengthen the Communist claim of East German sovereignty. In the event that the Allies retaliate by banning Soviet military and all East German travel in West Germany, Soviet Zone authorities are said to be prepared to stop all Allied travel through East Germany except for personnel of the Berlin garrisons.

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2. ROLE OF SOVIET PARTY SECRETARIAT ENHANCED

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The secretariat, executive organ of the Soviet Communist party under Khrushchev as first secretary, may now replace the presidium as the executive seat of power in the USSR.

The plenum of the Soviet party central committee which took place on 16 and 17 December added three party presidium members to the party secretariat, raising the membership of that body to eleven.

The three new secretaries, Nuritdin Mikhittinov, Aleksey Kirichenko, and Nikolay Ignatov, who are considered Khrushchev partisans, will presumably relinquish their provincial party posts for full-time work in Moscow.

Khrushchev may have maneuvered three additional men into the secretariat in order to increase the power of that group. Since 10 of the 15 full members of the party presidium, the top-level policy-making body, are now members of the secretariat, the move may have the effect of bypassing nonmembers of the secretariat--among others, Bulganin, Voroshilov, and Mikoyan. At the same time, the diffusion of responsibility among a greater number of secretaries will limit the opportunity of any one secretary, such as Suslov, to rival First Secretary Khrushchev effectively.

Suslov is widely considered in East European Communist circles to be a "Stalinist" rival to Khrushchev.

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6. INDICATIONS OF BRITISH SHIFT TOWARD US POSITION
ON COMMUNIST CHINA

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[Redacted] British Foreign Secretary Lloyd and
numerous Conservative members of
Parliament appear to have changed their
opinions and [Redacted] oppose wider
recognition of Communist China.

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In discussions this week with Ambassador Whitney, some 40 Conservative Members of Parliament expressed satisfaction that the United States has not yielded to earlier British persuasions but has continued to recognize and support Taipei. As reasons for the shift, Whitney suggests--among other things--concern over the growing influence of the Asian-African bloc in the UN which might be reinforced if Communist China became a member, appreciation of the need for Overseas Chinese--particularly those in Malaya--to have a counterattraction to Peiping, and the growing disillusion over prospects for increased trade with China.

Whitney doubts, however, that there will be any public change in Britain's policy toward Peiping in the near future and believes the Conservative MP's will continue to maintain publicly that Britain was right in recognizing a de facto situation on the mainland. The Labor opposition's commitment to Chinese Communist representation in the UN--which is strongly endorsed by British public opinion--indicates the difficulty the Macmillan government would encounter in any attempt to change its long-standing China policy.

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10. THE SITUATION IN CUBA 25X1A

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Cuban rebel leaders are believed to have completed plans to step up revolutionary activities against President Batista during the last days of December.

Action, possibly planned for Christmas week, may include attempts to assassinate military leaders. Rebel leader Fidel Castro's limited success in his campaign to burn sugar fields and his apparent inability to instigate a "general revolutionary strike" are probably at least partly responsible for the decision to increase terrorism.

Castro's capability for antigovernment operations has grown since he opened his guerrilla campaign a year ago. He now has greater popular support, especially in Oriente Province, and his forces have increased and now are better organized and equipped. Without the active support of the armed forces, the labor movement, and other important elements, however, it is unlikely he can unseat the government.

President Batista continues to keep an iron grip on the political situation. He suspended constitutional guarantees on 15 December for another 45-day period--the seventh such suspension in a year.

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