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25 June 1959

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Copy No. C 62

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 39
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 10-2
DATE: 4.14.80 REVIEWER:

25X1



State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004500390001-9

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004500390001-9

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

25 June 1959

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Berlin: West German officials have received reports that "voluntary" action may be taken by East German workers to interfere with the West German presidential election in West Berlin on 1 July. This would include a "strike" by railway workers and autobahn police. A Moscow commentary of 23 June declared that the decision to hold the election is a "gross and dangerous provocation."

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West Berlin Mayor Brandt does not expect serious interference with travel of assembly members to Berlin. However, should the East Germans take drastic action and prevent a significant number from getting to Berlin, he has agreed with Bundestag President Gerstenmaier that the assembly should be convoked elsewhere.

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Watch Committee conclusion--Berlin: No significant indications bearing on hostilities. With regard to the West German presidential election in West Berlin on 1 July, the East Germans will probably start a propaganda barrage and may engage in some forms of harassment, which would possibly include some interference with civilian traffic. Physical prevention of holding the election seems highly unlikely.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Watch Committee conclusion--Middle East: (Situations susceptible of direct exploitation by Sino-Soviet bloc action which would jeopardize US interests exist, particularly in Iraq and Iran. The initiation of significant hostilities is unlikely in the immediate future.)

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III. THE WEST

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Caribbean-OAS: President Betancourt of Venezuela has stated that the situation in the Caribbean is "drifting toward war." He says that his government and others in the area would oppose consideration of the Dominican Republic affairs by the Organization of American States (OAS). In Betancourt's view, such action would only strengthen the Trujillo dictatorship which he said popular opinion throughout the Americas considers "a focus of infection that must be removed." Betancourt believes that the only alternative to war and to a fiasco for the OAS is for Trujillo to be persuaded to resign.)

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25 June 59

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Communists Planning to Interfere With West German Presidential Election

West German officials have received reports--possibly leaked by the East German regime--of "voluntary" action to be taken by East German workers to interfere with the West German presidential election in West Berlin. Such "spontaneous" action--possibly including a "strike" by railway workers and autobahn police--would be in line with party propagandist Gerhard Eisler's threats on 6 June when he said it was not easy to persuade East Berlin workers to be patient in the face of the West German provocation.

Soviet propaganda has termed holding the election in Berlin a "gross and dangerous provocation," but the USSR has made no direct threat to prevent the holding of the election. The Communist strategy appears rather to be aimed at so frightening some West German electors that they will not attend the 1 July meeting in Berlin. Some harassment such as deliberate slowdowns at the checkpoints cannot be ruled out.

Mayor Brandt agrees with Bundestag President Gerstenmaier that if significant numbers of delegates fail to arrive in Berlin, the election should be held elsewhere. Brandt does not anticipate any serious trouble. He also said that East German interference "would not necessarily be a bad thing" because it could be exploited before world public opinion.

Three cases of East German interference with American military personnel on the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn during the past week--if publicized--might influence some West German delegates not to make the journey. In each case the East German police stopped the Americans after they had been processed through the Soviet checkpoint and demanded to see their travel documents. When one American officer refused and asked to see a Soviet officer, the policeman replied that the East Germans and not the Russians controlled the autobahn, and he threatened to detain the American "for a week or longer."

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Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004500390001-9

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III. THE WEST

Venezuelan President Sees OAS Powerless to Avert Caribbean War

(President Betancourt of Venezuela has stated that the situation in the Caribbean is "drifting toward war" but that his government and others in the area will oppose action by the Organization of American States (OAS) to stop this)

(Betancourt--a spokesman for the several leftist-liberal regimes seeking to overthrow the remaining dictatorships in the hemisphere and to oust them from membership in the OAS--stated that collective action to prevent hostilities between Cuba and the Dominican Republic would only serve to strengthen the Dominican dictatorship and discredit the OAS. He said the only alternative to war and to a fiasco for the OAS is for Trujillo to resign.)

(Betancourt commented that he had failed to prevent the current and rather ineffectual OAS investigation of foreign aggression against Nicaragua, but that he is confident he can block OAS aid to Trujillo. His assertion that hemisphere sentiment is running heavily against Trujillo is borne out by the excessive care with which most governments are examining OAS competence to act in this case.)

(Should Trujillo decide to make a formal appeal to the OAS instead of mounting a counterattack against Cuba as he now reportedly plans, most governments in southern Latin America would probably feel obliged to vote for action in his favor. Many governments in the Caribbean area, however, feel that domestic opinion would not permit this. Although an OAS meeting of consultation can be convened by a simple majority vote, subsequent decisions on aid to the victims of aggression require a two-thirds vote.)

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