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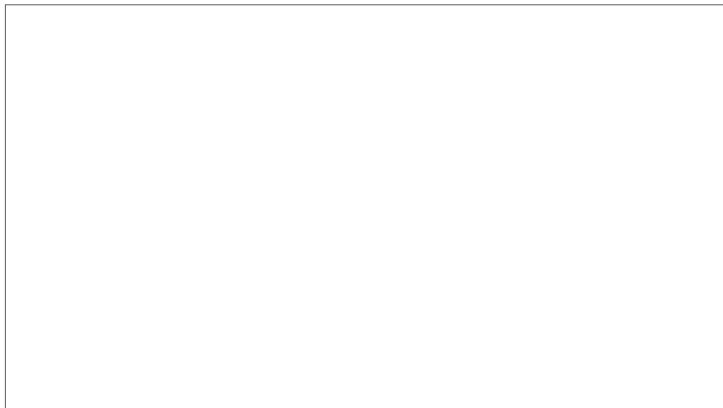
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1. SOVIET PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MAY MEET AGAIN IN DECEMBER

Comment on:

Party Secretary Nikolai Belyayev, thought to be a Khrushchev protégé, wanted to carry the purge of Zhukov further by purging all government and party officials guilty of the "cult of personality." [redacted] Khrushchev's policy of moderation won out, but it is possible that the issue is still fermenting and that a meeting of the central committee has been called for next month to consider the issue further.

Although Khrushchev was apparently not the target of Belyayev's campaign at the October plenum, a further discussion of the "cult of personality" issue might reflect on Khrushchev. Khrushchev's position appears to be firmer than ever, but recent reports from behind the iron curtain assert that there is strong opposition to some of his policies. [redacted] even suggested that the base of Khrushchev's political power has been weakened by the purge of Marshal Zhukov. [redacted]

2. AMERICAN MISSION SEES NO MAJOR CRISIS IMMINENT IN BERLIN

Comment on:

The American mission in Berlin believes the Russians will prevent the East German government from taking any action in Berlin which would precipitate a major crisis at this time.

Mission officials have the impression that the Russians in Berlin are going out of their way to be friendly. They see the possibility, however, that the Russians may renounce responsibility for police power with respect to the Western Allies in East Berlin and East Germany in an effort to push the two Germanies concept and compel the Allies to negotiate with East Germany.

The East German regime may tighten customs and police controls even further in an effort to reduce the flow of new currency to the West and to curtail the serious loss of manpower to the West. In order to make a formal show of its "sovereign" rights to do so, the regime might attempt to supervise the movement of Allied rail and highway traffic to Berlin. The mission believes, however, that East Germany's desire to reap the benefits of the new interzonal trade agreement which is to provide the East German economy with indispensable items may act as a deterrent to any substantial interference with West Berlin's communications lines.

3. MANY NATO MEMBERS PLAN FURTHER DEFENSE CUTBACKS

Comment on:

The current annual review of NATO defense plans reveals a continuing trend toward cutbacks among those members defending the central European area. American Ambassador Burgess, permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council, believes that if this trend is not promptly arrested, it will do "great damage" to the prospects of maintaining adequate "shield" forces on the European continent.

Despite the wide expression of concern over recent Soviet developments, the need for greater scientific and technical cooperation within NATO, and the general need for greater unity in the alliance, members feel no obligation to maintain even their present efforts to support the "shield" forces. Some link continuation of present plans to receipt of new technical information from the United States, such as plans for nuclear submarines.

Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Norway all are planning reductions. Most cuts are keyed to defense budget ceilings--Belgium has operated under the same ceiling since 1952.

These countries are influenced by the known lags and cutbacks of the major European NATO members, whose plans are still to be formally examined. Germany is lagging in submitting details on long-range plans, which still call for fulfilling only about two thirds of the original 500,000-man goal for NATO-committed forces; Ambassador Houghton in Paris has pointed to a serious deterioration in the effectiveness of French army forces; and Britain is soon to make formal approaches for approval of a second reduction of its forces in Germany. [redacted]

4. TURKS REDUCE FORCES ALONG SYRIAN BORDER

Comment on:



About one half of the Turkish troops along the Syrian border were ordered on 14 November to return to their normal stations, according to

Ambassador Warren in Ankara. Deployments in August and September had brought the number of Turkish troops in the Syrian border area to 50,000. Reduction of this force by one half would still leave approximately twice as many troops as were there prior to August. The size of the remaining force indicates continued anxiety in Ankara over internal developments in Syria.

The Damascus government will probably continue to complain that the remaining Turkish military forces are menacing Syria and aggravating the situation in the Middle East.

5. LAOTIAN COMMUNIST PARTY EXPANDING ACTIVITIES

Comment on:

The Laotian Communist party has expanded its membership during 1957 from 2,000 to around 3,800,

[redacted] this party, which was formed in March 1955, will remain covert but will dominate and direct a political organization which is to operate legally under the terms of the royal government-Pathet Lao settlement. The Pathets estimated at the end of 1956 that out of a total population of about 1,200,000, some 170,000 people throughout an area covering three fifths of Laos had been organized into their front group.

[redacted] Thailand may soon be affected by developments in Laos. [redacted] ethnic Thai propaganda teams from Communist China have been working in recent months in association with the Pathet Lao, with which they have a close cultural affiliation. [redacted]

[redacted] February 1957 that Thai cadres undergoing training in Communist China were clandestinely returning to Thailand across northern Laos. [redacted]

6. SITUATION IN GUATEMALA

Comment on:

The present instability in Guatemala seems likely to continue and there are mounting indications that a military coup may be imminent.

Moderate political and military forces are making no progress in their attempts to form a centrist coalition to oppose both rightist Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes and the Communist-infiltrated Revolutionary party in the 19 January national elections. These moderates, seriously weakened by factionalism and conflicting personal ambitions, are becoming increasingly aware that they have no presidential candidate with the required army support as well as general popular appeal.

There is a growing belief among army officers, most of whom strongly oppose both Ydígoras and the Revolutionary party, that the army will have to take over. There is reason to believe that the defense minister, Colonel Roberto Lorenzana, and a group of his colleagues may already have decided on the members of a junta which is to seize the government no later than 29 November.

Any military government would almost certainly have to deal with strong popular and organized political reaction against any postponement of the scheduled elections. During the mob violence last month, army leadership was indecisive and vacillating.