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# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## PROBABLE SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO GERMANY DURING 1952



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NIE-53

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The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 14 February 1952. See, however, footnotes of the Department of the Air Force to paragraphs 5 and 6.

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## PROBABLE SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO GERMANY DURING 1952

### THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet objectives with respect to Germany and probable Soviet courses of action in pursuit of those objectives during 1952.

### ESTIMATE

#### Soviet Objectives In Germany

1. The Kremlin has the ultimate aim of bringing under its control the strategically important area and resources of Germany. The Kremlin regards any substantial part of Germany not under Soviet control, particularly if associated with the Western Powers, as a major obstacle to the realization of this ultimate aim and as a potential threat to its own security. The Kremlin will not consider as satisfactory any solution of the German problem that does not promise to bring all of Germany within the Soviet orbit as a step in its aim for world domination.

2. The Kremlin is undoubtedly aware that an overwhelming majority of the German people is hostile to both Communism and the USSR and that conditions are not now favorable for gaining control of West Germany through political warfare.\* The Kremlin also must realize that the Western Powers are determined to oppose by force any attempt to impose Soviet control on West Germany by military force. Thus, the Kremlin must recognize that an attempt to impose Soviet control

\* Political warfare as here used includes all manner of political and economic pressure, diplomatic action in the UN and elsewhere, propaganda and front activities, Communist Party and Communist-controlled trade union activities, support of all kinds of revolutionary movements, and psychological warfare.

over all of Germany at this time would entail a decision to accept general war. Therefore, the Kremlin is almost certainly currently preoccupied with the following immediate objectives:

a. To prevent the integration of West Germany with the West and to prevent the rearmament of West Germany.

b. To retain and consolidate its hold on East Germany.

3. While the expulsion of the Western Powers from Berlin remains a basic Soviet objective, the Kremlin's immediate objective in Berlin apparently is to weaken progressively the Western position in Berlin. Meanwhile, the Kremlin is exploiting West Berlin as an avenue for illegal trade and as a point at which pressure can be applied.

#### Possible Soviet Political Moves Towards The Achievement Of Its Objectives In West Germany

4. The Kremlin is aware that the integration of West Germany with the West, including West German rearmament, faces serious inherent obstacles, and it probably estimates that rearmament will not achieve substantial results in 1952. We believe, therefore, that the Kremlin will continue to pursue its objectives in West Germany by political warfare at least while the prospect for West German

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integration with the West and West German rearmament remain uncertain.

5. We believe that during the period of this estimate, the Kremlin will not give up or weaken its control over East Germany to prevent West German integration with the West, or West German rearmament. It is unlikely that in 1952 the Kremlin will surrender the great advantages, military and economic, which the USSR derives from its control over East Germany in return for the establishment of an independent, disarmed and united Germany which it might hope subsequently to subvert. In order to delay West German integration with the West and West German rearmament, the Kremlin might attempt negotiations on free elections throughout Germany, but only to gain time. The Kremlin almost certainly believes that free elections would result in a repudiation of Communism in East Germany. Moreover, the Kremlin would not be satisfied that a united Germany which was not under Soviet control could be kept neutral, or that Germany, once free, would not eventually rearm and turn against the USSR. We believe, therefore, that the Kremlin is unlikely actually to permit free elections to take place, even if the Kremlin were convinced that by this means it could block West German integration with the West and West German rearmament. As a tactical maneuver, the Kremlin might remove some of its more overt control mechanisms, including some of its military forces. We do not believe, however, that the Kremlin would so relax its control over East Germany as to affect the foundations of Soviet authority.\*

6. We believe, therefore, that the Kremlin will seek to retain and consolidate its hold on East Germany. So long as it retains East Ger-

\* As in NIE-50, "Probable Developments in East Germany Through 1952," in which the likelihood of withdrawal of Soviet occupational forces from East Germany was also considered, the Director of Intelligence, USAF, wishes to add the following comment:

"It is the view of the Director of Intelligence, USAF, that the time remaining in 1952 is not necessarily so short as to preclude the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal from East Germany if such action were necessary to secure a demilitarized and neutral German state."

many, the USSR will remain in a position to use East Germany as a lever in negotiations with the West and to prevent German unification on terms unfavorable to the ultimate extension of Soviet control to all Germany. Furthermore, so long as Soviet troops occupy East Germany, the USSR will retain a valuable military base for either offensive or defensive military operations against the West and for attempts to intimidate the West.\*

7. On the other hand, the Kremlin is not likely to feel that the complete and formal integration of East Germany as a Satellite in the Soviet orbit would be an acceptable solution of the German problem. Such integration would be likely to hasten the rearmament of West Germany, intensify irredentism in West Germany and turn the pressure for German unity against the USSR.

8. The Kremlin will almost certainly manipulate the Berlin situation in an effort to undermine West German and West Berlin confidence in the ability and determination of the Western Powers to maintain their position in Berlin and in West Germany. To this end, it will probably continue its intermittent harassing tactics. When the present program of constructing rail lines and canals to bypass West Berlin is completed this year and Western retaliatory power has thereby been reduced, this harassment may be intensified, possibly even to the point of another complete ground blockade. On balance, however, we believe that a complete ground blockade will not be reinstituted so long as the Kremlin hopes to influence the course of events in West Germany, since action of such a drastic nature would almost certainly produce a storm of adverse West German public opinion. We do not believe that the Kremlin will attempt to seize West Berlin by force during 1952, except in the event of general war.

#### Possibility Of Soviet Military Operations To Achieve Objectives In West Germany

9. It is unlikely that the Kremlin believes that West German rearmament and integra-

\* Note Air Force comment on paragraph 5.

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tion with the West will produce substantial results during 1952 — in the form of divisions and military production — sufficient in themselves to warrant deliberate resort to general war or actions involving the grave risk of war. Moreover, the Kremlin undoubtedly views developments in West Germany in the context of the general East-West balance of power. The Kremlin will probably not feel itself confronted with the choice between general war and at least the temporary abandonment of its expansionist goals, so long as it believes that actual or potential German strength is offset by the increasing strength of the Soviet bloc and/or by military, political and economic weaknesses in the West.

10. There can be no doubt, however, that the Kremlin would regard the revival of German military and economic power, even in West

Germany alone, as a major barrier to the achievement of its immediate and ultimate objectives. It is further probable that the Kremlin would deliberately initiate general war if it came to the conclusion that West German rearmament, in conjunction with the growing strength and unity of the West, were developing an irreversable adverse shift in the balance of military power which the Kremlin believed could not otherwise be checked or countered and constituted a grave threat to Soviet security. We do not believe that the Kremlin will reach this conclusion in 1952. Nevertheless, we continue to recognize the grave danger of a general war in 1952 resulting from a Kremlin action or series of actions not intended to have that result, or even from actions which, in the Kremlin's view, entailed that risk, but not the certainty thereof.

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