

CONCLUSIONS
Berlin Working Group


The ad hoc Berlin Working Group at the request of the Berlin Task Force met today, reviewed the available intelligence and reached the following conclusions:

1. We see no indication that the USSR intends in the near future to test the Western position in Berlin beyond the usual minor harassments endemic to the Berlin situation. Soviet leaders appear to be going through a period of consolidation and reappraisal of their foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cuban affair. Since the first of November, Soviet leaders have publicly committed themselves to future negotiations with the US on Berlin and have been careful to avoid giving an impression of urgency to the need to reach an early settlement. While this does not preclude unilateral Soviet or East German action, it does suggest a period of reduced tension over Berlin.

2. We have noted no ground or air activity by Soviet, East German or other satellite military forces suggestive of an imminent move against Berlin.

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- A. GSFG units appear to be conducting recruit training in garrison areas and are absorbing the influx of draftees which have arrived in the past few weeks. We have definite evidence that three-year draftees are leaving the GSFG and there appears to have been no net increase of men or equipment in East Germany. There is no evidence that East German or Soviet units in East Germany are on an alert status or have redeployed in the Berlin area.
- B. However, during the first half of December flight activity by the Soviet 24th TAA has been about one-third of normal. Other Soviet Bloc air activity has been close to normal. This drop in activity by the 24th TAA is presently unexplained, but may be due to unfavorable flying weather. There are reports that the 24th TAA pilots have not yet rotated to the USSR. If so, they may not be flying because their yearly training requirements have been fulfilled.
- C. Activity by other Bloc forces elsewhere appears normal with no alert status noted in any of the commands.
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3. The increase since mid-October of West Berlin bus tours by uniformed Russian troops appears designed to manifest the Soviet "presence" on a basis coequal with the Allies. Unlike previous Soviet attempts along these lines, such as the use of armored personnel carriers last August, the low-key tours have aroused no popular reaction. On the other hand, the tours may be nothing more than orientation trips for recruits newly introduced into GSFG.

4. If there is no agreement allowing West Berliners to visit East Berlin during the coming holiday period, we anticipate an increase in incidents along the Berlin Wall. In any event, there will be a sharp increase in the number of West Germans visiting East Berlin. Meanwhile the continued construction and improvement of barriers, fences and other devices to control the south and west zonal borders of West Berlin is designed to reduce border incidents and to widen the depth of the border area so that apprehension of East German refugees will not be visible from the West.

5. The East German population continues restless. The current initial steps of a de-Stalinization campaign, designed in part to counter public hostility and gain a



measure of popular support, already are causing concern among hard-line party members and point to a difficult period for the regime. [REDACTED]

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