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Gorbachev and the East Berlin PCC Meeting:
Prospective Initiatives

Summary

Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev probably will use the annual Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee meeting of party and government leaders in East Berlin at the end of this month to press for Western movement on INF and in the Vienna discussions on a mandate for new conventional arms control talks, and for US flexibility on SDI. A more dramatic move, such as the announcement of a unilateral withdrawal of some Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, is less likely but cannot be ruled out. As in the past, the Warsaw Pact leaders will probably endorse creation of nuclear-free zones in Europe, giving special attention to a prospective nuclear-free corridor along the inner-German border. [redacted]

There is a good chance, however, that Gorbachev will try to upstage President Reagan's visit to West Berlin next month by addressing specific German concerns, possibly an offering on the emigration of ethnic Germans from the USSR, expressing a readiness to discuss contentious Berlin issues, or touching on issues related to the question of German reunification. We consider it unlikely that Gorbachev will propose a fundamental

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change in Four Power rights in Berlin, but he could suggest a number of measures that would appeal to West Berliners and West Germans. We cannot exclude the possibility of an initiative on German reunification as has been bruited in the West European press but doubt that it would be more than a public relations gesture even though it might include a call for peace treaties with both Germanys or allude to Moscow's 1952 reunification proposal. A German initiative would appeal to Moscow for the likely fissures it would expose within NATO, but it would also seriously risk complicating Soviet relations with its East European allies and would at a minimum require intense intra-Warsaw Pact and Soviet-East German bargaining. [REDACTED]

The West European Context

The Western media, particularly the West German press, are rife with speculation that General Secretary Gorbachev will use the 28-29 May PCC session to make some dramatic new proposals on contentious East-West issues, including the German question. Last year Gorbachev initiated a wide-scale, highly publicized campaign to strengthen West European voices in the East-West dialogue. Repackaging familiar themes, the Soviets argued that their relations with Western Europe should move forward on a track parallel--not subordinate--to that between Moscow and Washington. They also stressed the need for an "innovative and positive" role in East-West relations by West Europeans having "common" concerns with the Soviets on European issues. [REDACTED]

The campaign appealed to West European sensitivities on both pan-European and bilateral issues. As it got underway, Moscow released a flurry of arms control "initiatives," expressed an eagerness to continue the CDE/CSCE process, and held out prospects for better trade relations. [REDACTED]

An Arms Control Initiative?

During the past two months, Soviet and Bloc officials have raised with Westerners the possibility of a Gorbachev initiative at the PCC. [REDACTED]

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

Since the beginning of the year, we have heard rumors of a planned unilateral Soviet troop withdrawal from Eastern Europe. At first the stories had Gorbachev announcing during his April Prague visit that two divisions would be pulled out of Czechoslovakia. This month the rumor is a PCC announcement of some withdrawals from East Germany.

[REDACTED]

In our view Gorbachev will probably concentrate on repackaging previous initiatives. He may announce a new draft on permitted SDI activities to be tabled in Geneva, promise imminent removal from Eastern Europe of the SS-12s without preconditions, elaborate on the Budapest Appeal, or urge the West to accept other Soviet and East Bloc proposals such as those for the creation of nuclear or chemical weapons-free corridors or zones in Europe. We cannot, however, rule out that Gorbachev will announce Soviet readiness for unilateral troop withdrawals. He may tie the withdrawals to his call during his Prague visit for an East-West ministerial conference to push for an early agreement on a mandate for new force reductions talks in the Atlantic to the Urals area.

[REDACTED]

Whatever the substance of Gorbachev's statements in East Berlin, they will be packaged to appeal to Western publics.

[REDACTED]

At the same time, Moscow intends to multiply Washington's difficulties by frequent and highly-publicized initiatives that will keep the United States off balance and force it to react to Soviet initiatives or risk appearing to Western publics as cynical and uninterested in reducing East-West tensions.

[REDACTED]

Playing the German Reunification Card?

Rumors of a Soviet initiative on German reunification have repeatedly surfaced over the years, some by the Soviets themselves.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In mid-May
the US embassy in Bonn reported that, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Soviet Germanist Portugalov, in a complete about face,
had been "whispering" favorably about German unity. In a January
newspaper article Portugalov had denounced Chancellor Kohl's
preelection rhetoric on reunification. [REDACTED]

Last week a West German newspaper touched off the latest
avalanche of media speculation with a story that Gorbachev
intended to announce in Berlin an initiative on German
reunification. It quoted an unnamed FRG official as saying Bonn
had been expecting such a proposal for months. The paper also
claimed a confidential government poll showed 71 percent of the
West German respondents would welcome unity in a nonaligned
Germany. Government spokesmen have denied that Bonn has any
evidence to support this story, and the East Germans have
predictably labelled the whole affair as "idle fantasy."
Moreover, at a press conference last week Soviet Foreign Ministry
spokesman Gerasimov forefully reaffirmed Moscow's position of
two separate German states. [REDACTED]

The Soviets are keenly aware of the power and fascination
the idea of reunification holds for many West Germans. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Soviet move on reunification would be likely to touch off
an intense debate in West Germany. The press and the opposition
would demand that the government make every effort to test Soviet
intentions. If Moscow only hinted that it was rethinking its
position, many West German politicians and journalists would call
for expanded dialogue and cooperation with the Soviets to
influence their decision. The discussion of reunification
probably would increase neutralist sentiment and undermine
support for NATO, which polls show to be widespread but
shallow. Many publicists would revive the argument that the
Western powers prevented reunification in the 1950s and continue
to put their own security interests ahead of German national
aspirations. [REDACTED]

Although the Kohl government would prefer to avoid such a national debate, it almost certainly would feel constrained to welcome signs of Soviet flexibility on the German question. Bonn probably would call for a unified Western position on any Soviet offer while also exploring Moscow's thinking through independent channels, including East Berlin. The Kohl government would insist that any reunification scheme include provisions for free elections, perhaps with international observers. Like former chancellor Adenauer in the 1950s, he also would be likely to insist that any reunified German government maintain the option to form a military alliance with the West. Much of the opposition, however, would counter that such a precondition was unacceptable to Moscow and thus doomed any prospect of German unity.

On balance, we think it is unlikely that Gorbachev will propose an initiative on reunification at this time. Even though he may view a divisive debate on reunification in the West as desirable, doing so would foment controversy in the Warsaw Pact as well as in NATO. Such a gesture would greatly disturb East German leaders who know full well that they would not survive politically in a unified Germany. Moscow's other allies-- particularly Poland and Czechoslovakia--also would be reluctant to support any Soviet nods toward reunification. Indeed, a revival of the German question might immobilize both alliances and possibly threaten Gorbachev's other initiatives, which are aimed at distancing the West Europeans from the United States.

Berlin

The coincidence of the PCC meeting in East Berlin and the 750th anniversary of the city has led some press commentators, academics, and Western officials to speculate about the possibility of a Soviet initiative directed toward the city, one writer suggesting Gorbachev would even offer to tear down the Berlin Wall.

In our view a major Berlin initiative during the PCC is unlikely. In practice, the Soviets continue to adhere to their definition of the city's special status, including the toleration of special Western Allied access to East Berlin (see Appendix

B). They continue to protest to the Western Allies actions by Bonn and West Berlin officials they claim violate the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement. Moreover, earlier this year the Soviet diplomatic representative in West Berlin told the US Minister there that Moscow wishes to maintain the Allied air corridor regime to Berlin because its existence provides justification for the Soviet role in the city. We doubt that Gorbachev is prepared to reopen the fundamental questions pertaining to Four Power rights in Berlin or surrender any rights arising out of the wartime treaties and associated agreements. [REDACTED]

The Soviet party secretary responsible for Bloc relations, Vadim Medvedev, reiterated in East Berlin late this month the standard Soviet position on Germany: that the territory of the former German Reich now contains "two sovereign states, the GDR and FRG, and the special entity of West Berlin." He also described statements that West Berlin is a part of the FRG as "absolutely untenable arrogance." Medvedev's remarks were clearly directed at the speeches emphasizing West Berlin's ties to West Germany made by West German Chancellor Kohl and West Berlin Mayor Diepgen on the occasion of West Berlin's kickoff of the 750th anniversary celebration last month. They were probably also meant to reassure the East German regime, fearful that speculation about German reunification would be destructive to its long, uphill struggle to create a sense of nationhood. As a further sign of its displeasure, Moscow also canceled the attendance of Soviet mayors at an international gathering of mayors in West Berlin this month. [REDACTED]

Gorbachev may, however, offer some platitudes that hold out the prospect of some improvement in West Berlin's situation in the context of the overall East-West relationship. He could, for example, suggest tangible improvements for the city's residents, including greater freedom of movement between the eastern and western sectors or propose that West and East Germany consult about establishing direct air links between West Germany and East Berlin's Schoenefeld airport. [REDACTED]

Trade

Although the economic aspect is a major element in the FRG-Soviet relationship, a trade initiative is an unlikely avenue for overshadowing President Reagan's trip to Europe and Berlin. There is nothing comparable to the gas pipeline issue outstanding for Gorbachev to build headlines on. Instead we expect the Soviets to continue pushing for expanding joint ventures and increased high-technology imports during the next year in a typically business-as-usual manner. [REDACTED]

West German journalists and politicians, on the other hand, have strongly emphasized the prospects for closer economic ties

with Moscow. In his Davos speech, for instance, West German Foreign Minister Genscher argued that Gorbachev's economic reforms opened the possibility of vast new markets for Western business. The press is devoting much attention to talks between West German businesses and the Soviet government on forming joint ventures. West German newspapers have carried a spate of interviews with leading officials in Bonn and Moscow on bilateral economic ties. [REDACTED]

The enthusiasm for expanded trade stems from political-- more than economic--considerations. Although the West Germans believe greater trade is needed to foster East-West detente, economic realities do not seem to portend a major increase in Soviet-West German economic cooperation. [REDACTED]

Human Rights

The principal human rights dispute between the West Germans and the Soviets centers on emigration of ethnic Germans from the USSR, but some of the force has been taken out of this extremely emotional issue by a recent increase in the number allowed to move to the FRG. Further, Moscow apparently has indicated to Bonn that this trend will continue. The West Germans probably are even more reluctant than in the past to stress Soviet domestic human rights violations for fear of jeopardizing the increased emigration. [REDACTED]

On the related issue of inner-German visitation and emigration, the Soviets could push East Berlin to make concessions, but they would get little credit for it and would antagonize the East Germans, who want to control the pace of such potentially destabilizing changes. We anticipate no significant change in the low-key efforts of both sides on these issues. [REDACTED]

The Bottom Line

The PCC has traditionally been a venue for highlighting Warsaw Pact positions on aspects of the East-West relationship. At a minimum, Gorbachev will use it to boost his image in Western Europe of reasonableness, flexibility, and concern. He probably also hopes to further perceptions in West Germany that a new phase of East-West detente is possible and lower fears of Moscow as a military threat. He may calculate that both perceptions would promote a more negative public image of the United States in West Germany, especially in light of a growing belief that Washington is pressuring Kohl into an ill-considered INF/SRINF agreement. [REDACTED]

At the very least, Gorbachev will probably offer vague proposals that will seek to further the long term Soviet objective of attenuating West German ties to NATO and sowing divisions within the Alliance without detracting from the immediate desire for an INF accord. The principal risk to the Soviets in the media hoopla surrounding Gorbachev's presence in East Berlin at the PCC session is that he will not fulfill the West German public's expectations. This could lessen public pressure on Kohl to show greater flexibility on issues of concern to Moscow.

Appendix A

The "Stalin" Proposal for a Reunified Germany, 10 March 1952

After several years of intra-Allied correspondence on reunifying Germany, the Soviet Union submitted a draft peace treaty that proposed an all-German government for a united Germany. The draft treaty provided for a remilitarized Germany with an economy unfettered by any restrictions, such as those imposed after the First World War. The core of the draft treaty consisted of seven political conditions.

- Germany is re-established as a unified state.
- All armed forces of the occupying powers must be withdrawn from Germany not later than one year from the date of entry in force of the peace treaty. Simultaneously all foreign military bases on the territory of Germany must be liquidated.
- Democratic rights must be guaranteed to the German people...[who will] without regard to race, sex, language or religion enjoy the rights of man and basic freedoms including freedom of speech, press, religious persuasion, political conviction and assembly.
- Free activity of democratic parties and organizations must be guaranteed in Germany with the right of freedom to decide their own international affairs, to conduct meetings and assembly, to enjoy freedom of press and publication.
- The existence of organizations inimical to democracy and to the maintenance of peace must not be permitted on the territory of Germany.
- Civil and political rights equal to all other German citizens...must be made available to all former members of the German army, including officers and generals, all former Nazis, excluding those who are serving court sentences for commission of crimes.
- Germany obligates itself not to enter into any kind of coalition or military alliance directed against any power which took part with its armed forces in the war against Germany.

The United States, after consultations with London and Paris, argued that no treaty could be discussed until conditions conducive to free elections had been created and a free all-

German government had been formed. Moreover, the Soviets were suggesting a united Germany within the borders established at the Potsdam conference, but that conference had deferred territorial questions until a peace settlement. Most importantly, the Western Allies objected to the provisions for a German military as limiting Germany's freedom to join in association with other countries, such as the proposed European Defense Community.



Appendix B

Western and Soviet Differences on the Legal Status of Berlin

Even though the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement (QA) removed a number of contentious issues that had made Berlin the frequent focal point of East-West tensions, it did not resolve fundamental differences between the Western allies and the Soviets on the legal status of the city. Instead, the Four Powers agreed to make "practical improvement" in the city's situation "without prejudice to their legal positions."

The West's Position

Britain, France, and the United States contend they occupy Berlin jointly with the Soviet Union as equal partners with equal rights. They therefore postulate

- The Western presence in Berlin is an "original" right based on the wartime treaties and rights.
- Access to Berlin by the powers derived from their original right.
- Soviet withdrawal from the Allied Control Commission (Kommandatura) in 1948 led logically to tripartite control of the Western sectors.
- The Soviet Union cannot unilaterally transfer its right in its sector to the East Germans; therefore, East Berlin remains subject to quadripartite authority.
- Western original rights take precedence over East German sovereignty because those rights predated the creation of the East German state.

The Soviet Stance

Soviet leaders have argued since the late 1940s that they have supreme authority in the city and have granted the Western allies limited rights of residence. They also claim that the city has always been part of their occupation zone. Based on these positions the Soviets maintain

- There is no original Western right in the city; Moscow tolerates the Western allies there for the moment.
- There are no Western transit rights to Berlin except those freely granted by the USSR, for military

movements, and those granted by East Germany for civilian travel.

- Because the Soviet Union holds full occupational authority in Berlin, it has legitimately handed over its rights in the Soviet sector of the city to East Germany. Quadripartite authority, therefore, is limited to the Western sectors.
- West Berlin is a "separate political entity" and all actions of the Western allies and West Germany in the city are illegal unless Moscow agrees to them.
- The QA must be interpreted restrictively and that which is not expressly permitted by the accord requires Soviet assent.
- Inasmuch as the Western allies have no original rights, they cannot claim priority over East German sovereignty.

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