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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: European Security -- Themes from East and West

1. The movement of political forces in Europe appears increasingly to forecast change in the relationships which have obtained there since 1945. The form and fortune of the Western Alliance, the role of the United States within that alliance, and the relations between the two Europes, East and West, are in a state of flux. The question has been raised whether or not to redefine the American military role in Europe. And the USSR has sought through various means to move West European discontent to its own advantage. At the moment, the Soviets have revived the proposition that all differences between Eastern and Western Europe can be resolved peacefully and permanently through the means of an all-European security conference. This paper addresses itself to that proposition, to the motives and the meanings of the Soviet proposal, to the responses of the West Europeans, and to the prospects for significant movement within this sphere within the foreseeable future.

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2. In brief, we have concluded that: (1) the USSR's current campaign for European security is consonant with its traditional interest in diminishing the US presence on the continent and in preserving the status quo in Germany; (2) there is, in fact, rising interest in Europe in some form of settlement with the USSR, in part because of growing questioning of the US role in Europe, and in part because of a yearning to believe that an active Soviet military threat no longer exists; (3) the West Europeans, nevertheless, still generally recognize the Atlantic connection as vital to their own ultimate interests; and (4), in any case, there appear in the near term to be few prospects for the actual convocation of a security conference, or the acceptance of new security arrangements, both because of a Soviet disinclination to press the issue and because of West European reluctance to complicate relations among themselves, and especially with West Germany, by accepting Soviet terms for accommodation.

Soviet Policy

3. The USSR has generally avoided the use of crude pressures in Western Europe since 1962. The Soviet leaders seemed after the Cuban missile crisis to appreciate the grave risks involved in

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threats and demonstrations of power, and at last to comprehend that such tactics only served to consolidate the Western Alliance and the American presence in Europe. But, though the USSR's policies toward Europe have been relatively quiescent in recent years -- as, for example, in Berlin -- its basic strategy is still to isolate West Germany, disrupt the Western Alliance, and sever the close ties between Europe and the United States.

4. The Soviets have seen new opportunities in recent frictions in European-American relations and have sought, especially since last spring, to play a more active role in European politics. They have played on Western European concern over US actions in Vietnam, seeking to encourage skepticism over the reliability of the US commitment to Europe and to stimulate opposition to US policies generally. They have continued to cultivate France, with an eye to heightening tensions and contradictions between Europe and the US. And they have emphasized the desirability and feasibility of a European detente and the need for an all-European conference to promote security.

5. For the Soviets the heart of a European security arrangement is a settlement of the German question on Communist terms. This means first of all a legalization of the division of Germany,

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and if possible, agreed limitations on arms in Germany. The hoped-for effects are a weakening of the Federal Republic's alliance ties and ultimately its political isolation. In power terms, this is the outcome which Soviet agitation of the benign theme of European security is intended to promote.

6. Soviet advocacy of an all-European security conference has implied that a grand European settlement would be made without American participation or at least in a way which gave the US no choice but to ratify the result. Moscow clearly recognizes that there is a strong desire in Western Europe to believe that increasingly constructive relations with the East are possible, and apparently believes that there is receptivity to the view that the US is an obstacle to general detente. To encourage the growth of such sentiments in Western Europe, Moscow has carefully sought to further the impression that the cold war is over in Europe and that the need for NATO has vanished along with the threat of Soviet attack.

7. Soviet use of the slogan of European security is not new; it dates back at least to 1954. Specific Soviet proposals for zonal security arrangements go back to a year later, to 1955, when Foreign Minister Molotov suggested that all of Germany and

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at least some of its neighbors be subject to arms limitation and inspection. A series of such "plans," both Soviet and East European, were issued throughout the remainder of the decade and into the 1960's.^{1/} But the current Soviet campaign for European security did not begin until last March when Brezhnev revived the idea in general terms in his address to the 23rd Soviet Party Congress. Other Soviet leaders soon echoed Brezhnev, and in July the USSR convened a meeting of the Warsaw Pact which, among other things, issued a call for a "general European conference" to consider "questions of European security and cooperation." ^{2/}

1/ For example, the Baltic Sea of Peace Proposal of 1957, the Rapacki Plan of 1958, and the Gomulka Plan of 1964.

2/ The Warsaw Pact declaration contained seven proposals (1) the development of general European cooperation based on good neighborly relations and the renunciation of all forms of discrimination and pressure; (2) the relaxation of military tensions in Europe through the simultaneous dissolution of the military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact; (3) the adoption of partial measures toward "military relaxation," including the "liquidation of foreign bases," the withdrawal of troops from foreign soil, troop reductions by "both German states," and the establishment of de-nuclearized zones; (4) the exclusion of the "possibility of access by the German Federal Republic to nuclear weapons in any form, directly or indirectly;" (5) recognition of the "immutability of frontiers," including the Oder-Neisse line and the "frontiers between both German states;" (6) the signing of a German peace settlement which would proceed from "recognition of the fact of the existence of two German states;" and (7) the convocation of a European security conference.

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8. Since July, the USSR has sought to arouse Western European interest in the Warsaw Pact proposal but has not committed itself to any explicit course of action. Thus various Soviet spokesmen, including, for example, Kosygin in France, have tried to emphasize the USSR's sincerity in seeking a conference for settlement, but they have done so without explicit references to an agenda (this should be worked out by the participants) or the selection of participants (this is up to European countries themselves to decide). Nor have they indicated any sense of urgency concerning the timing of such a conference.

9. This lack of urgency probably stems from a number of considerations. The Soviets may not wish to convene a security conference until prospects for some tangible breakthrough appear substantially better than they do now. And, though perhaps optimistic about the long term consequences of frictions between Europe and the US and about the eventual dissolution of NATO, they almost certainly do not count on any dramatic developments in the short term. In any case, the Soviets are eager to extract as much propaganda advantage as possible from Western European interest in the Pact proposals before binding themselves to the specifics of a conference; they surely understand that great

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difficulties will arise once they have committed themselves to concrete proposals. In addition, they almost certainly see benefits in maintaining their flexibility while awaiting the outcome of US-British-German talks concerning the status of allied forces in Germany and while sizing up the impact of the new government in Bonn on German foreign policies. Finally, before getting down to particulars, the Soviets must deal with problems within their own camp.

10. These problems, while not insurperable, probably act as constraints on Soviet policy. There is, first of all, a general difference in attitudes between the Soviets and some of their allies. Some East Europeans have privately indicated their desire for US participation in a security conference, and seem genuinely interested in some sort of European detente and security arrangement. Some of them, more or less like the Soviets, see such an accord as desirable in terms of maintaining the status quo in Germany, but all of them, except East Germany, see it as necessary for the maintenance and growth of their national sovereignty. Crises, they fear, limit their ability to maneuver vis-a-vis the USSR and to press forward with policies of their own.

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11. There is, in addition, some dissension among the East Europeans themselves. While willing to associate themselves with a collective call for the recognition of East Germany, as in the Warsaw Pact proposals, a number of the East European states wish to avoid this issue in bi-lateral contacts with the West and with West Germany. The East Germans, whose own proposals for detente in Europe center precisely on this issue, have been dismayed and antagonized by this lack of allied concern and, most recently, by Rumania's eagerness to open diplomatic relations with Bonn. Indeed, the East Germans have openly implied that those states which seek to normalize relations with Bonn are helping the West Germans to separate the socialist countries and to isolate East Germany. Poland, for reasons of its own, seems to share some of this East German concern.

The West European Response

12. Rising hopes in Western Europe for improved relations with the Communist states have been accompanied by increased interest in new East-West security arrangements for Europe. At the same time, France's partial withdrawal from the Western Alliance has resulted in extensive discussions of a reordering of defense arrangements within the West itself. Differing views

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on the relative importance of these subjects have led to some confusion in the West European response to Soviet suggestions for a European security conference.

13. Although they do so now with less urgency, most West European governments continue to give priority to the maintenance of effective security arrangements within the Western Alliance. All of them including France regard the link to American nuclear power as essential to their security. All, except presumably France, still believe that no major East-West negotiations over Europe could be successful without a strong -- though perhaps altered -- Atlantic Alliance. Specifically, they would consider the continued presence of US military power in Europe important to the success of such negotiations. They believe that it would only play into the hands of the USSR if new European security arrangements were bought at the price of drastically reducing the US role in Europe. In addition, many who support this line of thought argue that no East-West arrangements on European security should hinder the eventual economic and political unification of Western Europe or perpetuate its present division into relatively small and weak states.

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14. Nevertheless, the trend of European thought in recent years has increasingly favored those who want to get on with East-West negotiations on all-European security arrangements. As the mood of detente in Europe has deepened, the need for a strong Western alliance has appeared to be less pressing. De Gaulle, of course, has assiduously cultivated such sentiments. In addition, as the frustrations attending the European unity movement have grown, an increasing number of Europeans have discarded the political unification of Western Europe as a practical goal and have sought to replace it with visions of harmony between all Europeans, both East and West. And in this, they have to some extent been sustained by their belief that their views are generally consistent with those of the United States, which has also stressed the idea of detente between East and West.

15. The response of most West European governments to renewed Soviet suggestions for a European security conference has been mildly favorable. Most of the governments would probably respond in similar fashion to anything which held hope of furthering detente in Europe. But they have all moved cautiously, have not accepted Soviet views on the subjects to be discussed, and have emphasized that a meeting should be held only after thorough diplomatic preparation.

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16. Most West European nations also would clearly want the US to participate in such a conference, both to provide a counterweight to the USSR and to assure adequate controls over Germany in new European security arrangements. Even the French have never explicitly opposed US participation, although recent French statements on the subject have been as ambiguous as those of the USSR. We believe that both Soviet and French leaders are aware that such a conference could not be held in the foreseeable future if the US were excluded. Hints to the contrary from Moscow or Paris are probably intended mainly to encourage the long-term growth of sentiment in Europe against a major US role on the continent.

17. The French, in their several high level discussions with Soviet leaders in 1966, appear to have treated Soviet suggestions for a European security conference very gingerly. De Gaulle probably would like nothing better than to negotiate with the USSR on European security questions. But he would only do so as leader of a West European bloc, or at least with the support of West Germany. He does not want to isolate France from Germany on this issue, and we believe that he would actively support a European security conference only if he felt it would

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lead to arrangements in which the Germans could acquiesce. West Germany, for its part, would certainly oppose a European security conference unless it seemed to offer some hope for progress toward Germany's national goal of reunification. A conference on terms as proposed so far by the USSR would obviously not do this.

The Outlook

18. A formal multilateral conference on European security is not likely in the near future. The bilateral contacts and negotiations among individual West European countries, and the USSR will almost certainly continue and probably increase. So will the amount of talk about mutual disarmament, "thinning-out" schemes for central Europe, and the possibility of ultimately disbanding both NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

19. The Soviets will be likely to step up their propaganda and diplomatic activities to persuade the West Europeans that the US is beginning to disengage from Europe and that detente with a benevolent USSR is an ever-growing possibility. They will probably continue to manifest a generally conciliatory approach to European problems and a willingness to act with restraint in such areas of policy as Berlin. They will seek to expand

cultural exchanges and economic relations wherever possible, and will probably continue to offer various security undertakings, such as nuclear free zones. They will probably continue to treat West Germany as a pariah, but are likely privately to test any hints that Bonn would be willing to come to terms with Soviet power and the division of Europe. They may at some point move unilaterally to reduce Soviet troop strength in East Germany. Alternatively, they may revive proposals for military disengagement in Germany together with limited arms control measures in the Central European area. It is unlikely, however, that the Soviets will be willing to make their complete military withdrawal from East Germany a part of any security arrangement which might eventually be negotiated.

20. It is doubtful that a great deal will come of the present talk about European security unless real progress can be made on the crucial problem, Germany. Progress here will presumably depend in some degree on the eastward probes and negotiations which the Kiesinger government is now initiating. The new German coalition has clearly signaled its intention to give top priority to the improvement of relations with the USSR and Eastern Europe. Kiesinger probably believes that this is the one

area of foreign policy where he will not antagonize either France or the US and where he may be able to create an image of activism and independence for his regime. In addition, Kiesinger probably expects to gain domestic political mileage by this course from an electorate which had grown increasingly impatient with Bonn's previous failure to achieve even slight movement toward German reunification.

21. We believe that the present West German government may make fairly major concessions to the USSR in coming months on two of the three conditions always cited by Moscow as prerequisites for a German settlement. First, it may be willing to renounce West German acquisition of nuclear weapons more explicitly than its predecessors. Second, it will probably move toward recognizing the present eastern boundary by giving clearer assurances that Germany will accept the Oder-Neisse Line in any future European settlement. On the third major condition posed by the USSR, that of official recognition of East Germany as a legitimate sovereign state, Chancellor Kiesinger will almost certainly not give in. He probably will allow greater West German contacts with East Germany, even at fairly high official levels, but will declare at the same time that these contacts do not constitute de jure recognition of the GDR.

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22. We believe, therefore, that for the foreseeable future the moves for an all-European security arrangement will continue to founder on the issue of Germany's division. Bonn will not agree to an arrangement which in effect terminates hopes for reunification, and its allies will not wish to affront the Germans on this issue, even though most of them apparently have no active desire to see Germany reunified. For its part, the USSR is almost certainly not yet prepared to revise its views on Germany. Consequently, comprehensive European security undertakings are likely to remain for the indefinite future a subject of diplomatic discussion and agitation but not of serious negotiation.

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