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AUSTRIAN SECURITY CAPABILITIES FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL OF OCCUPATION FORCES



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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AUSTRIAN SECURITY CAPABILITIES FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL OF OCCUPATION FORCES

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Austria's capability for maintaining its independence and security against internal and external pressures for at least one year following the simultaneous withdrawal of all occupation forces under either the "long" treaty, the "short" treaty, or any other arrangement that provides (a) for termination of the occupation and abrogation of the control agreement and (b) that Soviet-owned enterprises are subject to Austrian law.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Communist Party in Austria remains weak and without significant para-military capabilities. The Austrian population is strongly anti-Communist.

2. Present and projected Austrian security forces will probably be capable of coping with any internal Communist threat to the security of Austria after the withdrawal of occupation forces, provided that the US continues to give economic and political support to Austria and that Western military equipment is made available to the Austrian security forces.

3. If four-power troop withdrawal did not take place until 90 days after ratification of an Austrian treaty, the Austrian army which it is planned to build up during this period would almost certainly suffice to meet any internal attempt to overthrow the government.

Even if such withdrawal took place under arrangements which did not allow the full 90-day period, the existing Austrian security forces, with the active support of organized Socialist workers, could probably cope with such an attempt.

4. Any agreement on troop withdrawal which left in Soviet ownership part or all of the properties which the USSR now controls would present a serious security problem, but probably would not be a critical threat to Austria's internal security during the period of this estimate, so long as these enterprises are effectively subjected to Austrian law.

5. Austria would not be able to defend itself against an invasion by Satellite forces, but we believe the USSR would be unlikely to risk an open Satellite invasion of Austria unless the Kremlin is prepared to accept general war.

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DISCUSSION

6. *Austria's Political and Economic Stability.* There has been relatively little change in Austria's over-all stability and pro-Western orientation since the publication of NIE-21 (22 January 1951). The government and the vast majority of the people, particularly in the Soviet Zone, continue to be strongly anti-Communist. The Communist vote in the 1949 national elections did not exceed about 5 percent in any zone.

7. Despite probable continued economic difficulties and increased political strains, we believe Austria's political and economic stability following troop withdrawal is unlikely to deteriorate to such an extent as to create conditions favorable to a Communist coup within the period of this estimate. However, Austrian internal stability under such circumstances would depend upon Austria's continuing to receive US political support and US economic aid. While troop withdrawal would eliminate a burden on the Austrian economy, Austria still would not be self-supporting and cessation of US aid would cause serious economic deterioration. A withdrawal of US economic and political support would also make the Austrians feel exposed and helpless, would probably lead them to increase greatly their trade with the Soviet Bloc, and might result in a substantial increase in Soviet influence in Austria.

8. *Austrian Government Security Forces.* The strength and reliability of the Austrian security forces have improved. These forces now number about 34,000.¹ They include:

a. 16,551 Federal Police, constituting the police force of fifteen principal Austrian cities and towns. About 11,000 of the Federal Police are in Vienna.

b. 11,362 Regular Federal Gendarmerie, constituting the rural police force.

c. 3,027 Special Gendarmerie.

d. 3,065 Customs Guards.

These forces are in general armed with German World War II model pistols and rifles.

¹ See Appendix A for disposition of these forces within Austria.

The Vienna police also have tear-gas guns. In addition, the Regular Federal Gendarmerie have German light machine guns, and the Special Gendarmerie have some US scout cars, light machine guns, and carbines. The Federal Police have no special training, except in Vienna, where they are trained in riot tactics. The Regular Federal Gendarmerie has received some squad, platoon, and company training. However, its capabilities are limited by lack of logistic support, including inadequate transport and supply facilities. As a result, only about 6,000 could be concentrated at any one spot in an emergency. The Customs Guards, scattered along the Austrian border, are armed only with pistols and rifles.

9. The Special Gendarmerie, now being trained and equipped in the three western zones, is designed to serve as the nucleus of a projected Austrian army of 28,000 men. Progress in recruiting the Special Gendarmerie has been slow, partly because the Austrian Government is still fearful of provoking the USSR, and partly because only temporary status and low pay can be offered recruits at present. However, this force has received more extensive military training than either the Federal Police or the Regular Federal Gendarmerie, and plans call for the increase of this force from its present strength of 3,000 to 5,000 by the spring of 1953. Assuming agreement on an Austrian treaty, plans call for the Special Gendarmerie to be expanded from 5,000 to 28,000 men in the 90-day period specified between ratification of the treaty and withdrawal of the occupation forces. Under these plans, equipment would be made available from Allied sources. Trained manpower would be drawn primarily from World War II veterans.

10. *Austrian Communist Strength.* Despite some seven years of Soviet occupation of a large part of Austria, the Austrian Communist Party remains weak. Although the Party polled 216,000 votes in the last (1951) elections, the Communists' own count of the number of their activists is only 30,000. The Communists have not made significant in-

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roads into organized labor, which remains Socialist-dominated.

11. Since the early days of the joint occupation, the numbers and influence of Communists in the Austrian security forces have been sharply curtailed by action of the Austrian Government. The Ministry of Interior, under which all the security forces are organized, contains no known Communists. There are believed to be few, if any, Communists or Communist sympathizers in the Special Gendarmerie, and the 1951 union elections showed only a 1.3 percent Communist vote in the Regular Federal Gendarmerie.

12. Though considerable progress has been made, Soviet pressure has prevented the complete purging of Communists from the Federal Police; for example, 10 of the 27 police districts in Vienna are known to be headed by Communists. In the 1951 union elections, 14.4 percent of the Federal Police voted for Communist candidates (19 percent in Vienna). However, we believe that, immediately upon the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the Austrian Government would take measures to weed out Communists from the security forces.

13. The only approximation to a Communist para-military force in Austria is the *Werk-schutz* organization of factory guards in the Soviet-controlled enterprises in the Soviet Zone. Its estimated strength is not more than 3,000 men, all below 30 years of age; it is armed with rifles, pistols, and sub-machine guns. Although many *Werk-schutz* members are *Wehrmacht* veterans, there is no evidence that the *Werk-schutz* is being trained in platoons or companies. Of the estimated 60,000 workers in the Soviet-controlled enterprises, about 12,000 are believed to be potential recruits for expanding the *Werk-schutz*. However, the bulk of the 60,000 workers are anti-Communist and members of Socialist-dominated unions.

14. *Probable Austrian Security Capabilities.* In view of the limited strength of the Austrian Communists, particularly in para-military terms, we estimate that, with the

projected Austrian security forces, the government would be able to cope with any internal Communist threat during the year following the withdrawal of occupation troops. While the Communists would probably be capable of fomenting strikes, riots, and other disturbances, especially in Vienna and the former Soviet Zone; they would meet with strong opposition from anti-Communist labor unions. In addition, the bulk of the Austrian people, including those in Eastern Austria, probably would actively oppose Communist attempts to create widespread disturbances or to overthrow the government. Deprived of the immediate support of the Soviet army, the Austrian Communists would probably decline in strength and the Austrian Government would almost certainly take measures to restrict their activities.

15. If four-power troop withdrawal did not take place until 90 days after ratification of an Austrian treaty, the Austrian army which it is planned to build up during this period would almost certainly suffice to meet any internal attempt to overthrow the government. Even if such withdrawal took place under arrangements which did not allow the full 90-day period, the existing Austrian security forces, with the active support of organized Socialist workers, could probably cope with such an attempt.

16. There is no prospect that an Austrian army will develop the capability of repelling a Satellite invasion.

17. Any agreement on troop withdrawal which left in Soviet ownership all or part of the numerous Soviet-controlled enterprises in Eastern Austria would provide the USSR with continued opportunities for clandestine activity. However, as and when Soviet troops withdraw, the Austrian Government is likely to take measures to minimize the usefulness of these enterprises as bases for clandestine activities. Hence, while continued Soviet ownership of Austrian enterprises would present a serious security problem, it probably would not be a critical threat to Austria's internal security during the period

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of this estimate, so long as these enterprises are effectively subjected to Austrian law.

18. *Probable Soviet Intentions.* In any case, we believe that the USSR would estimate that the chances were poor for carrying off a successful coup with indigenous Austrian Communist forces after withdrawal of occupation troops. A Soviet attempt to support such

a coup covertly from the adjacent Satellites on a scale sufficient to insure success would be difficult to conceal. We believe that the Kremlin would estimate that such an attempt would provoke a strong Western reaction. For the same reason, we believe that the Kremlin would be unlikely to risk an open Satellite invasion of Austria, unless the Kremlin is prepared to accept general war.

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APPENDIX A

DISPOSITION OF AUSTRIAN SECURITY FORCES

(31 October 1952)

	FEDERAL POLICE	REGULAR FEDERAL GENDARMERIE	SPECIAL GENDARMERIE	CUSTOMS GUARDS (1 JULY)
<i>Provinces</i>				
Soviet Zone				
Lower Austria	413	2,315	.....	.....
Burgenland	76	668	.....	.....
Muehlviertel	186	472	.....	.....
Total Soviet Zone	675	3,455	.....	.....
Western Zones	4,700	7,757	2,837	.....
<i>Vienna</i>	11,176	150 ²	190	.....
TOTAL	16,551	11,362	3,027	3,065

² Assigned to administrative duties in Vienna.~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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