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SPECIAL ESTIMATE

COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO US ESTABLISHMENT OF A "VOLUNTEER FREEDOM CORPS"



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Published 13 April 1953

The following member organizations of the Intelligence Advisory Committee participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff.

The Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 9 April 1953. The FBI abstained, the subject being outside of its jurisdiction.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S (C) 1991
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____

AUTH: HR 70-2

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COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO US ESTABLISHMENT OF A "VOLUNTEER FREEDOM CORPS"

PROBLEM

To estimate Communist reactions to US establishment of a "Volunteer Freedom Corps" (VFC) composed of anti-Communist "escapees" from European Satellite States formed into national units under the command of US officers, and to psychological warfare measures designed to stimulate escape and enlistment in such a Corps.

ESTIMATE

The Kremlin's Estimate of the Corps' Significance

1. The Kremlin's primary concern with the establishment of the VFC would be to determine its significance as an indicator of over-all US intentions toward the USSR and toward Soviet control of the Satellite States. Much would therefore depend upon the general context of US policy and action in which the VFC was presented. Regardless of the terms of enlistment, the national groups established, the degree of US control, and other related factors, the Kremlin would certainly regard the establishment of the VFC as a further indication of US determination to liberate the Satellites. However, it would regard the VFC as part of a long-term program, not as an indication of imminent US military action.

2. The Kremlin would be unlikely to regard the VFC as in itself a militarily important force. It would appreciate the difficulties inherent in the recruitment, administration, and utilization of such a force, and it would probably estimate that Communist counteraction could prevent it from becoming a large and effective military organization. The Kremlin would probably estimate, however, that in the event of general war the VFC could have significance as a rallying point for defectors.

3. The Kremlin would probably estimate that the most significant aspect of the VFC would be its psychological and subversive potential within the Satellite States. At the same time, the Kremlin would estimate that it could exploit psychological warfare opportunities arising from establishment of the Corps by the US: e.g., by contrasting Soviet efforts for peace with US preparations for a new war, or by stressing US recruitment of European manpower to fight US battles. It would almost certainly estimate that establishment of the VFC would generate new strains within the Western alliance.

Probable Communist Counteraction

4. The establishment of the VFC would be unlikely, of itself, to cause the Kremlin to adopt countermeasures which, in its judgment, would involve increased risk of general war. Neither would the Kremlin be moved by the VFC to make concessions designed to bring about a relaxation of tensions.

5. The principal Communist counter-effort would probably be an intense propaganda campaign, within and beyond the Bloc. This campaign would be designed to frustrate the US propaganda effort in support of the VFC by discrediting the VFC as a device for recruiting European "cannonfodder" to fight for US imperialism, by discrediting the US as

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preparing for new aggressions, in contrast to Soviet efforts for peace, by stimulating renewed effort and vigilance within the Bloc to counter hostile US designs, and by creating fear and dissension within the Western alliance. In the course of this campaign the Soviet, Satellite, and West European Communist agencies of the Kremlin would probably evince a greater alarm than the Kremlin actually felt.

6. In coordination with this propaganda campaign, the Satellite governments would almost certainly take political action in the UN and elsewhere to indict the US for subversive intervention in their internal affairs. The Satellite governments would further restrict the movement of US nationals within their territories and might even sever diplomatic relations with the US, with a view to terminating all US access to Satellite territory.

7. However, if the Kremlin at the time of the establishment of the VFC were engaged in an attempt to reduce international tensions, its

reaction might be more moderate in character and might be delayed.

8. The Communist authorities would of course exercise their ample police powers to prevent effective recruitment for the VFC from the Satellite States. They would reinforce their already formidable frontier and internal police controls, terrorize prospective recruits, and threaten retaliation against their families and friends. However, they would probably arrange for a minimal and controlled flow of recruits designed to penetrate the Corps, subvert or intimidate its members, establish clandestine control within it, and destroy its usefulness. The Communists would also seek to use the VFC as a means of extending their intelligence activities, particularly if elements of the VFC were to be trained in the United States.

9. If for any reason the VFC were not a success, the Kremlin would certainly exploit to the full the psychological advantage thus obtained.

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Approved For Release 2000/08/29 : CIA-RDP79S01011A001000020002-5

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