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SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

31 March 1953

SUBJECT: SE-40: COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO U. S. ESTABLISHMENT OF A "VOLUNTEER FREEDOM CORPS" (Revised draft for Board consideration)

THE 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. Regardless of the terms of enlistment in the VFC and other details as yet undecided, the Kremlin's primary concern would be to determine the significance of the VFC as an indicator of over-all US intentions toward the USSR and toward Soviet control of the Satellite States. Much would therefore depend on the general context of US policy and action in which the

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VFC was presented. The Kremlin would certainly regard the establishment of the VFC as a hostile act and as a further indication of US preparations for an eventual attack on the Soviet Bloc. However, it would probably 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 militarily important in any case. It would appreciate the difficulties inherent in the recruitment, administration, and utilization of such a force, and would probably estimate that Communist counteraction could prevent it from ever becoming a large and effective military organization.

3. The Kremlin would probably estimate that the most significant aspect of the VFC would be its psychological and subversive potential. At the same time the Kremlin would estimate that it could derive important psychological warfare opportunities from US establishment of the Corps: 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 might also hope that establishment of the VFC would generate new strains within the Western alliance.

4. The Kremlin almost certainly would estimate that a failure of the VFC, whether by reason of a lack

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of volunteers or because of subsequent frustrations and disillusionments, would severely affect US psychological warfare capabilities.

Probable Communist Counteraction

5. 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. Communist countermeasures would probably be directed toward frustrating the VFC itself and toward deriving maximum psychological advantage from the US initiative in creating it.

6. The principal Communist counter-effort would probably be a violent propaganda campaign, within and beyond the Bloc, designed to (a) smother US propaganda in support of the VFC, (b) discredit the VFC as a device for recruiting European cannonfodder to fight for US imperialism, (c) discredit the United States as preparing for new aggressions, in contrast to Soviet efforts for peace, (d) stimulate renewed effort and vigilance within the Bloc to counter hostile US designs, and (e) create fear and dissension within the Western alliance. In the course of this campaign the Soviet, Satellite, and West European Communist

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agencies of the Kremlin would probably evince a greater alarm than the Kremlin actually felt.

7. In coordination with this propaganda campaign the Satellite governments would probably take political action in the United Nations and elsewhere to indict the United States for subversive intervention in their internal affairs. The Satellite governments might also sever diplomatic relations with the United States, with a view to terminating all US access to Satellite territory.

8. The Communist authorities in the Satellite States would of course exercise their ample police powers to prevent effective recruitment for the VFC. 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 in order to penetrate the Corps, subvert or intimidate its members, establish clandestine control within it, and destroy its usefulness.