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Prospects for the Peace Movement This Fall

**National Intelligence Council
Memorandum**

Secret

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**PROSPECTS FOR THE PEACE
MOVEMENT THIS FALL**

Information available as of 19 September 1983 was
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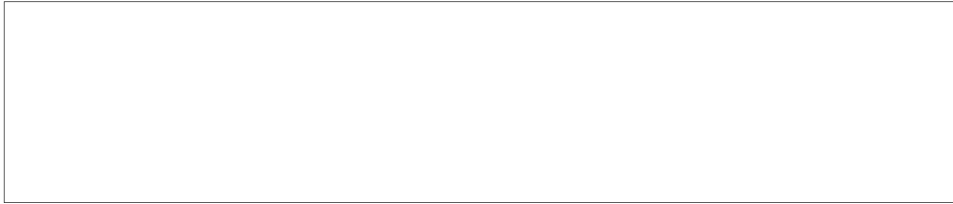
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The December 1983 deployment date has provided the peace movement with a target on which to focus, and we anticipate a major, last-ditch effort to stop the initial installation of INF. The largest demonstrations are planned for Bonn, Hamburg, Stuttgart, London, Rome, Brussels, and The Hague during the week of 22-29 October. Moreover, countless local actions throughout the fall are aimed at blocking military facilities, creating work stoppages, and confronting local authorities. The diversity of groups and tactics will confront governments with the difficult task of anticipating antinuclear events in many different localities and responding in ways that maintain law and order but avoid charges of political repression.

These fall activities, however, will mask the movement's interne-cine quarrels over strategy and tactics as well as the growing resignation of protest leaders that deployment is all but inevitable. Divisions between Communist and non-Communist groups and between those factions supporting and opposing violent action will probably grow wider as the deployment date nears, making it unlikely that protesters will be able to present a united front this fall.

The stage is also set for a shift in tactics and targets. While the mainstream peace organizations—church groups, environmentalists, leftists, and trade unionists—will concentrate on essentially nonviolent mass demonstrations, their inability to alter government policies on INF will encourage other groups to shift the focus to attempted disruptions of US military operations, a wide variety of headline-grabbing “symbolic” actions, and more violent acts. Small but militant groups are almost certain to take more aggressive actions in West Germany and to a lesser extent in Italy and the Netherlands.

On balance, NATO governments appear confident but not complacent about their ability to forestall widespread incidents of civil disorder. They are well aware of the implications of possible overreac-

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tions to such incidents which could become an issue of government suppression of civil liberties, engaging others not currently involved in the movement and thereby increasing the political costs of deployment. This will be particularly true in West Germany, where the protection of civil liberties remains an extremely sensitive issue in light of the historical past.

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DISCUSSION

1. The peace movement is now moving into a broad and well-orchestrated buildup phase that will climax in hundreds of separate "peace" actions this fall in the five INF basing countries. The December 1983 deployment date has provided the movement with a target on which to focus its protest activities. Over the past year contacts among peace groups in most of the INF basing countries have become more frequent and more systematized; and financing for the fall campaign, funneled through the churches and from those Communist parties and fronts that are subsidized from the East, seems assured. Thus, the movement will be able to muster large demonstrations in major cities during the week of 22-29 October and countless local actions throughout the fall aimed at blocking military facilities, creating work stoppages, and confronting local authorities. Surveys show that while participants in peace activities are in the millions, their number does not appear to be growing and there are wide-ranging estimates of the size of this fall's planned demonstrations. West German officials, for example, estimate that between 1.5 million and 3.0 million demonstrators will take to the streets, 10,000 of them with violent intentions, during the period before deployment. We estimate that the movement in West Germany may be able to call upon about 1.5 million activists through the fall. Some militants predict that the "high point" demonstration in Bonn on 22 October will draw some 500,000 participants, compared with the previous record of 300,000 two years ago.

2. Publicity devoted to the large marches has partially obscured the movement's continuing internecine quarrels and its inability to draw greater numbers into its fold. It remains a complex mosaic of groups with disparate political leanings, and protesters are unlikely to present a united front this fall. We believe local actions by individual groups will become more prevalent as the divisions between Communist and non-Communist groups and between those factions supporting and opposing violent action come to the surface. Mainstream peace organizations—including

church groups, environmentalists, leftists, and trade unions—probably will continue to concentrate on mass demonstrations as a way to influence moderate opinion, while radical groups believe that the October demonstrations will discredit peaceful tactics and permit them to take more aggressive steps against INF. This split within the movement could become more pronounced after deployment begins and create the potential for greater violence.

Mood of the Movement

3. The ambitious plans of protest leaders disguise growing resignation that they cannot stop deployment and that public involvement in anti-INF actions may be leveling off. Some protest leaders have become frustrated and concerned over their inability to affect government policy or substantially to increase the movement's strength as a pressure group over the past year. Their efforts to mobilize other political and social groups during the past year have encountered only mixed success:

- Staunchly conservative governments have been elected in West Germany and Britain, eliminating the possibility of ruling parties adopting some of the movement's goals. The Francophone Socialists in Belgium now intend to participate in protests this fall, but the Dutch Christian Democrats, despite substantial antinuclear sentiment within their party, have refused to cosponsor the major peace demonstration in The Hague on 29 October.
- European labor unions and Socialist parties—especially those in West Germany—have become more sympathetic to the movement's goals and have cooperated with it, but have refused to endorse national strikes, civil disobedience, or violent actions.
- Church leaderships in the key basing countries of West Germany and Italy have refused to denounce INF deployment as peace movement

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leaders had hoped; they have condemned violent protest and have declared that nuclear weapon deployments could be justified under certain circumstances. Also, while the Church of England's leadership has approved a policy of "no first use," it has rejected unilateral disarmament.

4. In the face of the movement's lagging momentum, protest leaders continue to see public opinion and the media as their strongest instruments in forcing governments to change their INF policies. Sizable parts of European publics remain opposed to deployment despite their governments' public relations efforts to explain NATO's dual-track decision, and this sentiment has, if anything, grown over the past year. USIA-sponsored polls in June 1983 show that opposition to INF has dropped only in Britain; opposition has increased slightly in West Germany and Italy; and anti-INF attitudes remain stable but strong in Belgium and the Netherlands (see table).

5. Protest leaders, while unhappy with their lack of impact on government policies, take comfort in the public opinion polls, and many probably hope that lurid media coverage of peaceful demonstrators being mishandled by local police or US military personnel will boost their cause. The massive media coverage that is expected—particularly during the October demonstrations—may add incrementally to the public opinion problems of the governments. We believe, however, that governments see INF deployment as a policy problem that can be managed despite its obvious unpopularity.

**West European Unconditional
Opposition to INF** *Percent*

	July 1981	July 1982	June 1983
West Germany	26	33	37
United Kingdom	22	38	28
Italy	40	45	54
Netherlands	38	44	42
Belgium	43 ^a	46	44

^a October 1981.

Tactics and Targets

6. The broad cooperation for large-scale demonstrations in major cities—the largest demonstrations will occur in Bonn, Hamburg, Stuttgart, London, Rome, Brussels, and The Hague during the week of 22-29 October—will increasingly be overshadowed by a trend toward more local and factional activities this fall. Planned activities fall into three general categories:

- Large-scale demonstrations in a few key cities will be led predominantly by leftist party leaders, church groups, Communists and their front groups.
- Widespread passive resistance campaigns (permanent peace camps, "human chains," fasts, and so forth) will be attempted mainly by ecologists, feminists, some church-related groups, and left-fringe and autonomous groups.
- Direct, and possibly violent, actions will be led by very small militant groups, possibly aided by terrorist sympathizers, against military bases and other government facilities.

7. The diversity of groups and tactics will confront governments with the difficult task of anticipating antinuclear events in many different localities and responding in ways that will maintain law and order while avoiding public charges of brutality and political repression. On the whole, national and local authorities appear equal to the task. Some officials, however, will continue to worry that the political climate will become "hot," because they cannot be totally confident that they have effectively planned for every possible contingency.

8. More direct actions are likely to occur as deployment approaches and as radical leaders try to bring on confrontations with US personnel in the hopes of creating an image of US "brutality." Some radicals may hope to create "martyrs" who can be used to strengthen the movement's resolve to continue the struggle and cast government leaders as reactionaries. Some of these groups have already succeeded in penetrating security perimeters around airfields in the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands.

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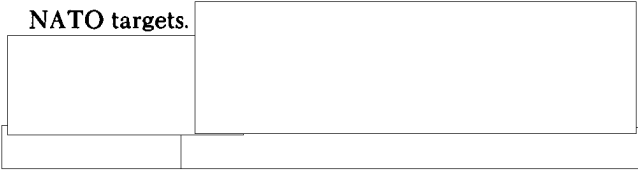


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9. There is a real possibility that terrorist groups on the fringe of the peace movement might use the fall anti-INF campaign to conduct attacks against US and NATO targets.



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RAF sympathizers were able to incite rioting during Vice President Bush's visit to Krefeld. Also, the West German Government is taking seriously the possibility that hardcore RAF members—who want to exploit the INF and "peace" issues—may attack munitions trains or other military and government targets.

10. The effect of terrorist actions linked to protests or, more likely, of a major demonstration turning violent would probably be to damage the movement's credibility. Surveys indicate that civil disobedience could reduce public approval of the movement by half or more and that outright violence would eliminate most of the movement's remaining support. Thus, such intentional and unprovoked violence by small groups would probably eliminate public sympathy for the movement and generate greater factional disagreements among peace groups about whether to condone such behavior; this factionalism could also diminish the movement's future effectiveness.

11. A less likely but more dangerous scenario would involve an overreaction by local authorities to planned anti-INF actions in anticipation of possible violence. There is the potential danger—exacerbated by the media's coverage of protesters' plans for obstructing military installations and confronting police—that state and local authorities might crack down prematurely or use excessive force. In that event, the issue of violent protest could be transformed into one of civil liberties, thereby engaging many not currently involved in the movement and increasing the political costs of deployment to NATO governments. This is especially true in West Germany, where the protection of civil liberties remains a very sensitive subject in light of the historical record.

12. On balance, however, we believe that most anti-INF activities will remain free of violence. The vast majority of citizens—including many peace activists—are opposed to civil disorder, and many protest leaders believe that direct resistance tactics such as clashes with police will damage the high level of support for the movement found among moderate, trade union, and socialist groups. Nevertheless, while protest activity this fall is not likely to live up to the most dire forecasts in the media, the problems faced by governments could become more difficult if:

- Large and more moderate peace groups affiliated with churches, unions, or political parties decide to support direct action against INF.
- Substantially greater public opposition to deployment becomes evident over the next few months.
- Terrorists become more heavily involved in planned protest actions.
- The Soviets give substantial support to militant groups or the terrorist fringe.

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The Soviet Perspective

13. The Soviets appear to be well aware that the peace movement is unlikely to coerce NATO governments into rejecting INF deployment. Nonetheless, they continue to court non-Communist groups on INF, especially the West German Social Democrats and the Greens and to subsidize local Communist parties and front groups in order to push their own peace campaign.

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The Soviets are likely, however, to keep a low profile toward the movement itself, in order to deflect publicized accusations that Moscow is manipulating protest activities. Thus far, orthodox Communist groups in the peace movement have favored demonstrations over civil disobedience and have argued against violence. We have no evidence that Moscow will actively support violent opposition to deployment. It may share the view of moderate peace groups that violence would provoke a public backlash. However, it is plausible that Moscow might come to

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view violent protest—in the face of almost certain deployment—as a way to delay or prevent full deployment, to raise obstacles against future NATO programs, and to promote further polarization of West European societies.

After Initial Deployment

14. After a tense period this fall, the overall volume of antinuclear protest activity in Western Europe is likely to diminish unless there is another major controversy involving US nuclear weapons. Over the last two years, protest leaders have focused their antinuclear campaign almost exclusively on the goal of stopping INF deployment, so that passing the important milestone of initial deployments is likely to produce a psychological letdown among both leaders and committed followers. Trying to avert this setback, leaders have redoubled their efforts to organize national and grass-roots actions. Nevertheless, the more moderate elements are likely to become resigned to deployments and less actively involved in demonstrations. The most militant activists, on the other hand, probably will be the last to abandon their efforts. Thus, while demonstrations in urban areas may become smaller, harassment at US facilities probably will diminish more slowly over the next year. Blockades, vigils, and similar activities are likely to crop up periodically, while sporadic attempts at illegal entry or sabotage will pose a constant threat, especially in West Germany.

15. Over the longer term, the peace movement is likely to have difficulty maintaining the present level of public interest and commitment to “peace” issues. The movement has already begun to repeat itself and become predictable—always a dangerous situation for groups seeking publicity—and there is a strong possibility that by mid-1984 the press may begin to undermine the movement by putting it on the back pages. The movement’s lack of new ideas, combined with strong public disapproval of disorder and the psychological letdown that many militants in the emotion-filled movement may suffer after December, seems likely to reduce the size of protest events in 1984 to a fraction of that occurring during earlier peak periods. As it becomes evident that deployments are continuing, many protest leaders could begin to change their

goals and tactics. They will look first for specific weapons issues of current appeal—such as the sensitive question of chemical weapons in West Germany. At the same time they probably will put greater emphasis on more general disarmament issues like nuclear-weapon-free zones and no-first-use proposals.

16. Thus, the possibility of increasingly violent and uncontrollable peace demonstrations remains small, but NATO governments are not complacent about the task of managing protest actions. Despite their outward assurances of confidence, West European officials remain anxious about the actions of extremist groups, which are the most difficult to anticipate and to counter. Also, NATO governments cannot rule out the possibility that confrontations between protesters and US military personnel could substantially fuel anti-American sentiment. Accordingly, West European officials can be expected to ask that the United States keep a low military profile throughout the fall. Moreover, NATO governments will strive to project an image of confidence that progress in the Geneva talks can still be made, in the hopes of dampening public anxiety about deployment and thereby undermining the efforts of the peace movement.

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