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THE JOINT STAFF

J2DM-134-61
25 April 1961

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General Debnoy has seen

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary of Defense

Subject: NIE 11-7-61, "Soviet Short-Term Intentions Regarding Berlin and Germany"

Enclosure: Brief of NIE 11-7-61

On 25 April 1961, the United States Intelligence Board approved an Estimate on "Soviet Short-Term Intentions Regarding Berlin and Germany" (NIE 11-7-61). A Brief of this Estimate is attached for your information in advance of the regular distribution which will be forthcoming.

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Germany (Berlin)*

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Robert A. Breitweiser
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BRIEFNIE 11-7-61: SOVIET SHORT-TERM INTENTIONS REGARDING
BERLIN AND GERMANY

This National Intelligence Estimate was approved by the United States Intelligence Board on 25 April 1961. Conclusions of this Estimate are as follows:

We believe that in the relatively near future the USSR will present a formal demand for a renewal of negotiations on the question of a peace treaty for "the two Germanies" and a new status for Berlin. Almost certainly, Khrushchev still prefers to negotiate on this matter rather than to provoke a crisis by unilateral action, chiefly because he desires to avoid the risks of a showdown in this dangerous area of East-West confrontation. He apparently still hopes that, if he keeps in reserve the threat of a unilateral move, Western fears of a showdown will induce the Allies to make concessions at the bargaining table.

In raising this issue once again the USSR will be seeking to strengthen the East German regime, by eroding and eventually eliminating the Western position in Berlin, and by bringing the West to recognize the permanence and legitimacy of that regime. The Soviets also hope to undermine West Germany's confidence in its present policy of participating in NATO's military effort since it remains a Soviet primary purpose to check the build up of significant military power in the federal Republic. In any negotiations which take place in the next few months the Soviets would almost certainly not hold fast to their maximum demand for a peace treaty with "the two Germanies" and the immediate conversion of West Berlin into a "demilitarized free city." Instead they will concentrate on getting an "interim agreement," of the kind outlined at Geneva in 1959, which would constitute a first step toward eliminating Allied occupation rights in West Berlin. The USSR might in the course of negotiations reduce some of its previous demands concerning such an interim settlement if it could obtain an agreement, which, at least by implication, put a time limit on these occupation rights. This outcome would be intended to lay the groundwork for later advances and would be, in the Soviet view, a major gain.

If higher-level negotiations do not take place, or if they break down, the USSR might agree to refer the problem to lower-level talks. More likely, however, it would move to summon a Bloc-sponsored peace conference and would eventually sign its long-threatened separate peace treaty with the GDR. Subsequently,

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the Soviets could transfer to the GDR control over Allied access and, sooner or later, permit that regime gradually to apply a policy of harassments. As another way of exerting pressure, they might choose to exploit the vulnerabilities of German civilian access, a course which would not directly threaten the Allied position but could seriously undermine the integrity of West Berlin. Under this or any other policy, however, the USSR is likely to continue to offer negotiations, always hopeful that the Allies can be induced to accede peacefully to the eventual loss of the Western position in Berlin.

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