

June 21, 1953

**CIA Current Intelligence Bulletin on Comments by
Charles Bohlen and the Deployment of Soviet
Troops**

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Summary:

Charles Bohlen, ambassador to the Soviet Union, speculates on liberalization reforms in East Germany and their potential impact on Soviet leadership and the reaction of other Satellite nations, following the East German uprising.

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

[3 Lines Excised]

Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[3 Lines Excised]

SOVIET UNION

1. Ambassador Bohlen comments on probable Kremlin reaction to Berlin riots:

[Excised section]

Ambassador Bohlen believes that the Berlin riots will forcibly impress on the Soviet leadership the dangers to a dictatorship inherent in a program of relaxation and liberalization, but that, nevertheless, the reforms in East Germany are likely to go forward.

The ambassador considers that the reforms were motivated primarily by the domestic situation. They stemmed from the realization by the new Soviet rulers that a continuation of intensified socialization there would lead either to economic and political catastrophe or would require methods of open terror which they were unwilling to employ.

Pointing to the fact that in its treatment of the Berlin situation the Orbit press had printed an almost unprecedented admission that a working class could oppose a Communist regime, and to the stress put on the need for greater consideration for the masses, the ambassador suggests that the reforms are likely to continue. Under Stalin, the reverse would have been almost certain.

Comment: The Kremlin's dilemma in the face of the East German situation is deepened by the fact that in the other Satellites no liberalization has been evident. If reform is applied solely in East Germany and the USSR, then Satellite discontent is likely to become an increasingly acute problem.

[Remainder of page excised]

WESTERN EUROPE

[Excised section]

9. Further deployment of Soviet troops in East Germany observed:

[blacked out section]

According to observations on 18 June [1 line excised] Soviet troops in battle dress, together with light artillery, tanks and armored cars, were stationed around Magdeburg, Halle, Leipzig, Meissen and other unspecified major cities in East Germany. [1 line excised] it was not possible to determine whether the Soviet troops had been sent to quell disturbances or merely to surround the cities to prevent possible uprisings.

Comment: This is the first reliable report of the deployment of Soviet troops in East Germany outside of East Berlin in connection with the recent disorders.

10. Mayor Reuter to renew official demand for all-Berlin elections:

[Excised section]

In a meeting with the Allied commandants of West Berlin, Mayor [Ernst] Reuter stated that he felt it necessary to renew an official demand for all-Berlin elections to restore normal life and free circulation throughout the city.

Comment: Last April, a similar proposal planned by Reuter and Eric Ollenhauer, chairman of the Social Democratic Party, was blocked by the Allied High Commission on the grounds that it might stimulate a Soviet counterproposal on the all-German problem which could be embarrassing to the Allies. This possibility still exists.

The unification of Berlin would have great appeal for West Germans in the light of recent events and would involve far fewer complications than all-German unification. Furthermore, a unified Berlin would presumably remain under four-power control.