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COMMITTEE OF POLITICAL ADVISERS

SITUATION IN WESTERN EUROPE

DRAFT SUMMARY PREPARED BY THE POLITICAL DIVISION

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SITUATION IN EASTERN EUROPE

PART I - SUMMARY

I. FACTORS AND SOVIET POLICY

1. The main events since May which affected conditions in the orbit are Khrushchev's ouster, government crisis at the end of June and Marshal Zhukov's removal from the Soviet leadership in November. Although these developments no doubt reflected a variety of disagreements among the Soviet leaders, the precipitating factor seems to have been internal. Consequently one could not expect any basic change of policy in major international issues, including those affecting the satellites. There has, in fact, been some change of tone in that the USSR has shown greater intransigence since the crisis, in such matters as German reunification and disarmament. Dans le discours qu'il a prononcé à l'occasion du 40ème anniversaire de la révolution d'octobre, Khrushchev a d'ailleurs mis l'accent sur la division du monde en deux camps, sans faire la moindre allusion au groupe des nations neutralistes.

2. Emphasis continues to be laid on the unity and the economic strength of the Soviet bloc. The USSR finds her political as well as economic reasons that it has to continue in its policy of economic assistance and decreased exploitation of the satellites. A degree of economic decentralization is apparent within the satellites, somewhat different in form, but basically in line with the aims of Khrushchev's prescription for Russia.

3. Khrushchev has long been associated with the "destalinisation" campaign and with a policy of rapprochement with Yugoslavia. But the strong line currently followed in the USSR against "revisionism", Khrushchev's patronising references to Yugoslav errors during his visit to Prague in July and his November 6th speech, do not encourage the view that he will look with favour on the growth of ideological liberty within the satellites. The situation in this respect, was not modified by the Khrushchev-Tito meeting in August. Tito's sudden decision not to visit Moscow for the 10th Anniversary Celebration of 7th November suggested that Zhukov's dismissal has introduced a note of uncertainty in USSR-Yugoslav relations.

4. For the USSR, prudence seems to dictate a period of stock-taking and consolidation in Eastern Europe after such major upsets as the Polish and Hungarian events of 1956 and the Moscow Government crisis of June, 1957. It has become increasingly clear that Chinese influence supports current Soviet policy wherever the stability of Eastern Europe is in question. There is little doubt, even after the overthrow of Zhukov, that the Soviet Government will pursue a policy of the strong hand in Eastern Europe, i.e. of intervention whenever any serious threat to Soviet control appears. Although the Soviet Union continues to accept a lesser degree of "control" over Poland, the policy of the strong hand could, in the last resort, be applied there also.

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5. Pour ces différentes raisons, il y a lieu de penser que toute "libéralisation" dans les pays satellites sera d'ordre économique plutôt que politique.

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