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CONCLUSIONS OF SPECIAL USIB SUBCOMMITTEE
ON BERLIN SITUATION *

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Period Covered:

15 through 28
November 1961

1. Since our last report there have been no significant Soviet political moves affecting Moscow's position on Berlin. Soviet officials are continuing to urge early negotiations and have implied that they expect a Western initiative following current Western consultations. Since the Soviet party congress, bloc leaders have reiterated Khrushchev's line on the unimportance of an exact deadline and the need for a negotiated settlement. Both Soviet and bloc statements appear to be carefully drawn to treat West Berlin and a German treaty as separate though related items for negotiations, with priority given to a settlement for West Berlin.

2. The physical barriers at both ends of the Babelsberg checkpoint on the autobahn appear to have been erected as another visible symbol of East Germany's self-proclaimed right to control traffic travelling through the GDR. The barriers do not necessarily indicate an early East German move to exercise direct control over allied ground access. However, the immediate effect is to constrict all traffic into a single lane immediately outside the checkpoints thereby

* These conclusions were approved by USIB at its meeting on 30 November 1961.

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treating allied vehicles on the same physical basis as non-allied traffic. The new construction also provides an increased capability for harassing allied traffic by deliberate slowdowns and delays.

3. There are some tenuous indications of preparations for Ulbricht's eventual replacement as party leader and, as such, central figure in the regime, although at the present time he appears to be exercising his usual authoritative control. Domestic East German news stories appear to be emphasizing his position as Chairman of the Council of State rather than as party first secretary. Moreover, there seems to have been an effort in recent months to bring younger party figures into top leadership positions to replace older men associated with Ulbricht since World War II.

4. The internal situation in East Germany remains substantially unchanged since our last report. Confusion, uncertainty and hostility in the party and the populace at large, particularly following Khrushchev's renewed attacks on Stalin's "cult of personality," continue despite counterefforts by the SED leadership.

5. Field training activity by Soviet Bloc Ground Forces has declined since the termination of the exercises conducted in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia during the period 12 to 18 November. However,

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further individual exercises may be held by elements of
GSFG and the East German Armed Forces. (SECRET)

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