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20 January 1950

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 263

SUBJECT: Estimate of Political Factors in the Strategic Situation, in the Event of War Before July 1951

1. The problem presented assumes the outbreak of a general war at some time before July 1951. It is further assumed that this event would result from deliberate Soviet military aggression.
2. In the assumed circumstances the immediate political objective of the USSR would be the occupation of Western Europe and the Near East and their incorporation in the Communist "camp."
3. The USSR regards political and psychological warfare as integral rather than incidental to the waging of war. Not only would its considerable capabilities in this respect be exploited to the utmost to facilitate its military operations, but the military operations themselves would be designed to support and facilitate the political revolution for the accomplishment of which the war was being waged.
4. In important respects the USSR is itself vulnerable to political and psychological warfare, but these vulnerabilities are latent and could not be effectively exploited until the mechanism of Soviet police control had been disrupted by Allied attack and Allied military support was immediately at hand.
5. The allies of the USSR would be the European Satellite States (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania), Outer Mongolia, North Korea, and China. In addition, Communist-led insurgents now hold extensive areas in Indochina and Burma, and those countries might be brought under Soviet control before July 1951.
6. The nations allied or aligned with the United States would be:
 - a. The North Atlantic Treaty States: Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and Portugal, with their overseas possessions.

Note: This memorandum has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

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- b. Other recipients of US military aid: Greece, Turkey, Iran, Korea, and the Philippines.
- c. Other members of the British Commonwealth: South Africa, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Australia, and New Zealand.
- d. Indonesia, and also Indochina, to the extent that it remained free of Communist control.
- e. The British Arab allies: Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq.
- f. The other American republics.
- g. The occupied areas: Western Germany and Austria, Trieste, the former Italian colonies, and Japan.

7. All other nations would probably be neutral initially. None would be sympathetic with the USSR or likely to join it in aggression. Most would be disposed to resist Soviet attack, and would look to the United States for aid in that case. A few might eventually be persuaded to become belligerent allies of the United States, even if not attacked.

8. More extended discussion of these matters is in the Enclosure.

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ENCLOSURE

POLITICAL FACTORS

THE ENEMY

1. Soviet War Aims.

The rulers of the USSR have as their ultimate objective a Communist world order under their own domination. The Problem assumes a Soviet resort to direct military aggression in pursuit of that objective. Such an event, within the period under consideration, would presumably result from a conviction on the part of the Kremlin that the progressive economic recovery, political coalescence, and military rehabilitation of Western Europe, in alliance with the United States, posed an intolerable threat to the security of the USSR, that the trend could be reversed only by military force, and that it had become imperative to act before the relative strength of the West had been further enhanced.

The immediate Soviet objective in resorting to war, therefore, would be to smash the supposedly hostile alliance of the West and to ensure the security of the USSR by military occupation of Western Europe and the Near East. Corollary objectives would be to seize and convert to Soviet use the resources of the conquered area, greatly enhancing the potential strength of the USSR in relation to that of the surviving capitalist states, and to reconstruct the states of Western Europe as Satellites on the Eastern European model.

2. Soviet Capabilities for Political and Psychological Attack.

In the Soviet concept, a state of political and psychological warfare is the normal relationship between the Communist and capitalist "camps." Armed conflict is merely the employment of additional means in the conduct of this continuing struggle. Thus, even in the event of a resort to military aggression, political and psychological warfare would be regarded as integral and basic rather than incidental to the business of waging war.

In conducting political and psychological warfare the Kremlin has at its disposal not only the apparatus of the Soviet state, but also that of the international Communist movement. A primary and undeviating allegiance to the USSR is required of every disciplined Communist, the world over.

Today, and every day the agencies of Soviet propaganda and diplomacy, and of Communist agitation, are constantly at work seeking to spread disillusionment and disaffection in the non-Soviet world, to

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discredit non-Soviet governments and to create antagonisms among them, and in every way to undermine the will and capacity to resist in the event of war. The way will have been prepared for presenting the USSR as the invincible champion of the peace-loving and oppressed masses, compelled by the machinations of capitalist warmongers to act in self-defense for the secure establishment of peace and democracy. By such propaganda the USSR would seek to paralyze resistance by inciting pacifism, labor disturbances, desertion, mutiny, and rebellion. Its particular targets would be industrial labor, the idealistic intelligentsia, self-conscious minorities, colonial populations, and the armed forces.

The USSR would also seek to cripple resistance through sabotage of military installations, transportation and communications facilities, other public utilities, war industries, and stocks of essential commodities. Communist penetration of industrial labor has been conducted with this end in view and, despite all precautions, would present a serious threat.

In areas under direct Soviet attack the hard core of militant Communists must also be expected to provide active fifth column support for Soviet military operations. The strongest capabilities in this respect exist in Italy and France.

Finally, in the wake of the Soviet advance, the surviving Communists would emerge as collaborators in the establishment of police control and civil administration. Despite the absolute power of the USSR as military conqueror, every effort would be made, as previously in Eastern Europe, to present conquest as liberation and the resultant Communist regime as the product of a genuine popular revolution. The purpose would be to convert the conquered communities into allies as quickly as possible through the familiar device of the Satellite state.

3. Russian Psychological Readiness for Armed Aggression.

The Russian people have on occasion rallied magnificently to expel foreign invaders from their soil, but have never yet succeeded in armed aggression against a major power. Their recent experience of war has given them reason to dread it, despite the ultimate triumph of the USSR. They have been taught to expect attack by the capitalist world and are probably prepared to resist it -- although their rulers have recently been under apparent necessity to reassure them that such an attack may not be imminent. They have not been prepared to support military aggression -- in contrast to the Germans, who for generations have been convinced of the necessity to defend the Reich beyond its own frontiers, or to the French of 1914, who were thoroughly indoctrinated in the spirit of the attack. The Soviet Russians are conditioned to think in terms of

revolutionary aggression, but military defense. Even in the armed forces, strategic doctrine is defensive: to receive the initial shock of invasion, give ground, and achieve ultimate victory by counterattack upon an overextended enemy. Thus the Soviet people and armed forces are psychologically unprepared for military aggression, and the Soviet government, for reasons of domestic as well as foreign propaganda, would find it necessary to be able to attribute the war to capitalist aggression.

The war would, of course, be represented as essential to national survival, and few Soviet citizens would be in a position to know better. Under the coercion of the circumstances, and particularly of the absolute power of their totalitarian state, the Soviet people would support the war effort, albeit without enthusiasm.

4. Political Vulnerability of the USSR.

In addition to the reluctance of the Soviet people to undergo the rigors of a new war, three principal bases of potential disaffection exist in the USSR:

a. General disillusionment, and resentment of the exactions, repressions, and personal insecurity characteristic of the Soviet state. Although the Russians have never known liberty and are inured to despotism, no people in modern times have been so closely controlled and systematically exploited for so long as they.

b. The peasants' particularly intense resentment of collectivization. The German Army found that the rural population (still a large majority) would support even a foreign invader so long as it was believed that he would abolish the collective farms and distribute the land on a basis of private ownership.

c. The hostility of minority nationalities toward Great Russian domination. The Ukrainians are most notable in this respect: Sporadic guerrilla resistance still exists in the newly annexed western Ukraine. Other areas of potential disaffection are the Baltic States, the Caucasus, and Soviet Central Asia.

This potential disaffection is normally kept under effective control through isolation of the Soviet people, internal propaganda, economic coercion, Communist monopoly of political power, and, above all, police terrorism. However, the unrepresentative character of the government, its high degree of centralization, and its ultimate dependence on police coercion are specific weaknesses of the Soviet system. Should the mechanism of close police control be broken, disintegration would set in.

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So long as Soviet military operations met with success and the internal security mechanism remained intact, no serious hindrance to the Soviet war effort would result from the latent disaffection within the USSR. If Soviet internal propaganda were disproved by events -- if Allied capabilities proved greater than expected, and Soviet capabilities less -- Soviet morale would be adversely affected, but not decisively so. The disaffection existing within the USSR could bring about a disintegration of resistance only if Allied attack succeeded in disrupting the Soviet control mechanism and Allied support were immediately at hand.

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5. Reliability of the European Satellite States.

At the outset, and so long as Soviet operations were proceeding successfully, the European Satellite governments would of necessity support the USSR. The Satellite armed forces, however, could not be regarded as reliable. Although no wholesale defections might occur in the circumstances, their utility would be strictly limited.

The vast majority of the people of the Satellite States are thoroughly disaffected toward the USSR and the Communist regimes imposed on them. They would welcome war in the hope of eventual liberation. The outbreak of hostilities might occasion sporadic acts of open resistance, which would be ruthlessly suppressed. In the circumstances, popular resistance would be predominantly passive: slowdowns, concealment of produce, draft-dodging, and other forms of non-cooperation. Active resistance would be mainly clandestine: counter-propaganda, espionage, sabotage, and acts of terrorism. Substantial guerrilla resistance could be expected only in Poland, and there would not exceed the ability of security forces to keep it within bounds.

This situation would be radically altered if the USSR were to appear to be losing the war and if advancing Allied forces were in a position to render effective support to popular resistance in the Satellite States. The Satellite armed forces, and even the rank-and-file of Satellite Communists, would become increasingly unreliable. Defections and popular insurrection would occur wherever there was prospect of immediate Allied support and early liberation. In the most favorable circumstances, crypto-nationalist elements in Satellite governments might attempt to assume at least a Titoist character, but the probability is that, in the face of the rising tide of patriotic reaction, most Satellite officials would perceive no future for themselves apart from the fortunes of the USSR and would accordingly seek to maintain a desperate resistance.

6. The Far Eastern Satellites.

No considerable problem of reliability arises in relation to Outer Mongolia and North Korea, short of impending Soviet defeat. In that situation, Korean nationalism might assert itself, but only under the protection of Allied forces.

7. The Position of Communist China.

The Chinese Communist regime is in a position to pursue an independent policy, but is firmly aligned with the USSR and would prove a willing ally in the event of war during 1950-51.

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The present capability of the regime to pursue an independent policy is at least equal to that of Tito before his break with the Kremlin. Like Tito, it has come to power by its own efforts in a genuine "revolutionary situation" (not as a result of Soviet military occupation and police control, except in Manchuria). It is supported by the psychological force of Chinese nationalism, and in China proper it controls the armed forces, the police, the media of internal propaganda, and the machinery of administration. Such outlying areas as Manchuria and Sinkiang, however, are already in effect under Soviet control, and there is an evident possibility that the influx of Soviet technical advisers may produce the same result with respect to the whole of China.

In any case, the Chinese Communists are genuine Communists who regard with respect the world revolutionary leadership of the Kremlin and the powerful support of the USSR. They are publicly pledged to support the USSR in any war with the West, and an explicit treaty of alliance is now presumably under negotiation. As in the case of Tito, only the USSR itself could force the Chinese Communists to abandon this policy and adopt an attitude of defiance, and it is too much to expect that the Kremlin would so conduct its relations with China as to produce that result. In all probability, therefore, China will remain through 1951, not a Satellite, but a willing ally of the USSR.

On this basis, the resources and facilities of China would be freely available to the USSR in the event of war, and China would become the belligerent ally of the USSR if Soviet policy were to require it. Strictly strategic considerations would not necessarily lead to such a requirement, particularly if Soviet strategy in the Far East were defensive. Given the nature of Soviet control in Manchuria and North Korea, no more would be required for an adequate position confronting Japan. A friendly, but non-belligerent, China would serve to cover an extensive front, while a co-belligerent China might prove a strategic liability. An important fact in popular acceptance of the Communist regime is the promise of peace to an utterly war-weary people. The actual value of Chinese belligerency would have to be weighed against the vulnerability of the regime to external attack and internal subversion if it were to involve the country in war on behalf of a foreign interest. Despite these considerations, however, the probability is that the USSR would require China to enter the war as a categorical act of political adherence.

Apart from Soviet requirements, war in Europe would probably so attenuate the anti-Communist military position in the Far East as to tempt the Chinese themselves to engage in imperialistic adventures, particularly as regards Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

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Apart from mopping up in China (including Formosa, Hainan, and Tibet), Southeast Asia is the only area in which there is any likelihood of a further expansion of Communism by means short of war before July 1951. The situation is precarious in Indochina, where Communist-led nationalists have long controlled most of Vietnam, and in Burma, where Communist insurgents control extensive areas amid a general disintegration approaching anarchy. It is rendered critical by the arrival of the Chinese Communists on the frontiers of those countries.

The most powerful political force in Southeast Asia, however, is not Communism, but a resurgent nationalism directed initially against European imperialism. Communism has flourished only in identification with this force. By the same token, were Communism to become identified with Chinese imperialism, the force of nationalism could be turned against it.

ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS

9. The North Atlantic Treaty States.

The nations adhering to the North Atlantic Treaty would honor their commitments in the event of war. The effectiveness of their resistance, however, would depend upon considerations of morale as well as organization and armament. The morale factor is likely to be critical with respect to the continental states directly exposed to Soviet mass attack. For the short term under consideration the means of resistance available to them will be strictly limited, and they will be acutely conscious of their vulnerability. Their determination cannot be sustained by promises of eventual liberation and ultimate victory, but will depend on confidence in prompt and decisive support.

Militant Communist elements in these states must be expected to serve as a fifth column in support of any Soviet attack. Their potential active strength is estimated as some 250,000 men and women in Italy, 100,000 in France, 13,000 in Belgium, and 9,000 in the Netherlands. The numbers who could be expected to engage in open violence, however, would be much less, and, unless they received prompt Soviet military support, they could probably be controlled. In the case of Iceland, the internal danger is less a matter of Communist strength than of a lack of effective means of control. With respect to Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Portugal, local Communist capabilities are limited to espionage and sporadic sabotage.

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Except for Indochina (see 8 above and 12 below) the colonial territories of the North Atlantic Treaty powers are generally secure, although Communist guerrilla activity continues in Malaya and there is some unrest in French North Africa, British West Africa, Cyprus, Eritrea, Madagascar, and Hong Kong. Unrest may develop in Italian Somaliland when the Italians return to that area.

10. Other Recipients of US Military Aid.

As recipients of US military aid, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Korea, and the Philippines look to the United States for support and protection against Soviet aggression. In common discretion, however, none would be willing to take any action on behalf of the United States deemed likely to precipitate an otherwise avoidable Soviet attack upon itself. Thus, if the USSR chose to direct its offensive effort elsewhere, each would remain non-belligerent. In all probability, however, each (except the Philippines) would be attacked immediately on the outbreak of war, in which case each would defend itself as best it could while calling for US aid.

11. The British Commonwealth.

Although the other Commonwealth governments are not committed by the adherence of the United Kingdom and Canada to the North Atlantic Treaty, it is probable that Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Ceylon would render prompt belligerent support in the event of Soviet military aggression. India and Pakistan would probably remain non-belligerent for the time being, although otherwise cooperative. They would expect Commonwealth support if they should be themselves directly threatened, and would resist Soviet or Chinese attack.

12. Indonesia and Indochina.

Although the solution was long delayed and its viability has yet to be tested, it appears that Indonesia like India, will prove a prime example of constructive solution of the colonial problem. Had Indonesian nationalism been frustrated, as is the case in Indochina, the area would have been rendered as vulnerable to Communism. Indonesian aspirations being satisfied, the continued alignment of the area with the West is probable, if not assured. Indonesian policy will probably parallel that of India, for similar reasons rather than because of Indian influence.

A similar solution has long been the only real hope for Indochina and it appears that the French are at last beginning to appreciate that fact, but their concessions may prove to be too little and too late. If the

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Vietnamese can be convinced that the Bao Dai regime can achieve a real rather than a counterfeit independence, and that the Communist alternative involves subservience to the USSR or to China, the situation may yet be saved, in which case Indochina would be aligned with the West in the same sense as India and Indonesia. The probability, however, is that by 1951 all or most of Indochina will have passed under Communist control.

13. The British Arab Allies.

The British treaties of alliance with Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq would be operative in the assumed circumstances. Egypt and Iraq have shown, in the past, a disposition to repudiate this alliance, but in any case, the British would utilize their bases and forces actually in the three countries as the occasion required. There might be popular disturbances in Egypt and Iraq, but it is probable that those governments could control the internal situation and that they would render at least passive support to Great Britain. There is no question about Jordan, which is dependent on the British for its existence.

14. The American Republics.

The other American republics would be aligned with the United States in various degrees of effective cooperation. The Rio Treaty requires: (1) immediate assistance to an American state attacked in the Western Hemisphere as defined, the form of assistance to be whatever each other state deems appropriate; (2) consultation regarding appropriate action in the event of an attack on an American state outside of the Hemisphere. Thus co-belligerence is not required, and wide variation may exist in the action taken by various states. If the USSR were to attack the United States within the Hemisphere, most of the American republics would become passive co-belligerents. Some (e.g., Brazil) would be disposed to accept active military roles. If the attack were to occur elsewhere in the world, the result would probably be essentially the same, but in some cases action would be slower. None of the American republics would favor the USSR.

15. The Occupied Areas.

The continued Western military occupation of Western Germany and Austria, Trieste, the former Italian colonies, and Japan would assure at least initial Western control of those areas.

The German people generally are strongly anti-Communist, although a potential Communist fifth column of some 70,000 men and women exists in Western Germany. The internal danger to Western interests lies not in the appeal of Communism, but in that of an unrepentant German nationalism disposed to take opportunistic advantage of East-West competition. All Germans are acutely sensitive to the partition of their country, the subordination of its interests, and the extreme vulnerability of its position in the event of war. Continued denial of free and equal West

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German membership in the Western community will tend to strengthen the influence of those who contend that Germany can attain national unity and dignity only in alliance with the USSR. Thus, in the event of war, German opinion is likely to be paralyzed by confusion in the calculation of national as well as personal interests.

Communism is an even less effective force in Austria than in Germany. Any considerable sentiment against open alliance with the West would derive from a sense of the hopelessness of resisting the USSR.

The Japanese people and government, acutely conscious of the vulnerability of their position, would look to the United States for protection. If assured of effective support, they would willingly take an active part in their own defense, in the hope of rehabilitation as the premier power in East Asia. If denied such a role, their attitude could become at least passive, and possibly hostile.

16. Finland.

The Finnish people are stubbornly anti-Soviet, but Finland is in no position to defy the USSR. The Finnish Government, therefore, without repudiating the Soviet-Finnish mutual assistance treaty, would seek to remain neutral, or at least to avoid Soviet occupation of Finnish territory. The Finns would not willingly assist the USSR, and, if Soviet forces entered their territory without express permission, they would fight. In any case, any Soviet forces entering Finland would be in hostile territory.

17. Sweden and Switzerland.

Both countries are ideologically anti-Soviet, but both cling to a traditional neutrality in the hope of avoiding Soviet attack. If attacked, both would resist to their utmost ability.

18. Ireland.

The Irish Republic is strongly anti-Soviet in sentiment, but disposed to make the cession of Northern Ireland a precondition to any formal alignment with the West. Eventually, it would probably become a belligerent ally of the Atlantic Powers.

19. Spain.

The Franco regime is conspicuously anti-Soviet, but is ideologically unacceptable to Western Europe. In the event of war, Spain, having no hope of accommodation with the USSR, might seize the occasion to escape from isolation into defensive alliance with the Atlantic Powers, but would probably remain non-belligerent unless attacked.

20. Yugoslavia.

The Tito regime is anathema to the USSR, which is actively seeking to overthrow it by any means short of open military aggression. At the same time, ideological considerations prevent its open alliance with the West. These circumstances would indicate a policy of neutrality in the event of war. If attacked, however, the Yugoslavs would offer a stubborn resistance.

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21. Israel.

Israel's position is one of deliberate neutrality between the East and West. Western ties are actually predominant, however, and, if compelled to take sides, Israel would align itself with the West.

22. Syria and Lebanon.

These states are too weak to pursue an independent policy. Their passive alignment with the West is probable.

23. Saudi Arabia.

Ibn Saud would expect the United States to defend Dhahran, and would do what he could to cooperate.

24. Afghanistan.

In dangerous proximity to the USSR and remote from succor, Afghanistan would remain neutral unless attacked.

25. Burma.

In its present anarchical condition, Burma would be incapable of taking effective part on either side. If the government should regain control, with Commonwealth aid, it would presumably honor passively its military commitments to Great Britain. If the Communists should gain the ascendancy, they would be too remote from Soviet or Chinese support to be able to provoke Western intervention with impunity.

26. Siam.

Siam has a chameleon-like facility in adopting protective coloration. Its passive alignment would be determined by circumstances. It could be coerced by internal and external Chinese Communist pressures, or bribed by the fulfillment of territorial aspirations with respect to the Shan States, Laos, Cambodia, or Malaya, but would take no action involving risk and would be unlikely to become an active belligerent in any case.