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2 February 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NIE 100-5-59: Implications for the Free World and the Communist Bloc of Growing Nuclear Capabilities

1. This estimate, the third in the series, was initiated in direct response to a request from Bromley Smith of the NSC Staff. He stated that the President had a strong personal interest in the previous paper on the subject (NIE 100-4-57) and desired to have the situation reviewed. Originally targeted for late October, the paper lagged because of the press of other papers and the NSC Staff agreed to a delay until January or early February.

2. From the point of view of intelligence, this is an extremely difficult paper since it deals with popular attitudes which cannot be measured with any precision, with the effects of the nuclear situation on government policies where the nuclear situation is only one element and cannot be factored out and weighed separately, and with possible future trends

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and policies in an era and in situations for which there are no precedents in history. Nevertheless, we have reached general agreement with the Representatives on a number of general propositions and the only likely area of dissent is in paragraphs 46-48.

3. These three paragraphs were introduced at the clean-up session on Thursday, 29 January to take account of the discussion at last Tuesday's meeting of the USIB on the subject of whether the USSR is likely to believe at some point that it can attack the US without receiving unacceptable damage in return and what the USSR would in fact do if it came to such a conclusion. It was agreed that the subject paragraphs would be checked out with the principals and if anyone wished to recommend major changes, the Board would meet with the representatives Tuesday morning before the USIB in an effort to reach agreement or to clarify differences.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

ABBOT SMITH
Acting Assistant Director
National Estimates