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NIE 11-4-60 SUMMARY

1 December 1960

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

MAIN TRENDS IN SOVIET CAPABILITIES
AND POLICIES
1960-1965

NOTE: This is an advance copy of the summary of this estimate
as approved by the United States Intelligence Board.

- Present Soviet outlook
- Soviet power
- Soviet policies toward
Non-Communist World

Central Intelligence Agency

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Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, The Joint Staff, AEC and NSA.

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 1 December 1960. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

1 December 1960

SUBJECT: NIE 11-4-60: MAIN TRENDS IN SOVIET CAPABILITIES
AND POLICIES, 1960-1965

SUMMARY OF THE ESTIMATE

1. The attempt to forecast developments within the USSR and in the Soviet power and policy for five years ahead is subject to some very severe limitations. Our estimative reach in many of the detailed matters discussed in the body of this Estimate is frankly acknowledged to fall well short of such a period. In respect of matters where we have actually made five-year estimates the degree of certainty falls off markedly for the later years. In the summary paragraphs which follow we are dealing with the broader trends which will determine the nature and magnitude of the challenge which the USSR will present to US security in the years ahead. These we believe are predictable in the main, although their particular manifestations clearly depend upon unknown and imponderable factors, or even upon purely fortuitous developments.

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THE PRESENT SOVIET OUTLOOK

2. One of the principal factors which will shape future developments is the outlook of the Soviet leaders themselves. There are two essential aspects of this. One is the Soviet leaders' belief, derived from the Marxist-Leninist ideology which continues to dominate their thinking, that their society and the non-Communist world are locked in an irreconcilable struggle which must continue until their system comes to dominate the world. There is no evidence at present to indicate that the Soviets will come to accept a world system which assumes the genuine coexistence of states and ideologies. For so brief a period as five years, Soviet behavior and policy will surely be marked by fundamental hostility toward the West, and especially toward the US as the principal obstacle to the fulfillment of Soviet aims.

3. A second essential feature of the Soviet outlook in the current period is its high confidence in the growth of the USSR's power and influence. Looking back to the weak and perilous position in which the new Communist regime found itself in 1917, remembering all the internal and external trials it has survived, and

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considering its growth in relative economic and military power over the last 20 years, the Soviet leaders are encouraged in their doctrinaire expectations about communism's inevitable triumph. That it was a Communist rocket which first ventured into space symbolizes for them that they are marching in the vanguard of history. They think they see a response to their doctrines and influence in the revolutionary turmoils of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. They expect to associate the peoples emerging from colonialism and backwardness with their own cause, mobilizing them against an ever more constricted world position of the Western states. The relative internal stability of the latter at present they see as only a transient phase.

4. While hostility toward the West and confidence in the eventual outcome of the world struggle will inspire Soviet behavior in the period ahead, we do not believe that the result will be policies of recklessness. The Soviet leaders recognize that Western resources remain great, and that the struggle for Communist power in the uncommitted world will be prolonged. They are particularly conscious of the hazards of nuclear war. Moreover, they have numerous problems of their own within the Communist

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Bloc which may move them to caution. Their policies will be marked by a persistent activism and opportunism, but also by what they consider to be a due measure of caution. More important, however, than the Soviet outlook and aims, especially since these offer little hope for accommodation and genuine peace, are the strengths and resources which the Soviets will be able to bring to the pursuit of their aims.

THE SOVIET POWER BASE

Economic Aspect

5. Perhaps the most firmly based of our estimates are those which relate to the growth of Soviet economic power. The Soviet economy has the resources and plant as well as the planning and directing mechanisms to insure steady fulfillment of most of the goals in industrial expansion which the leadership sets. The industrial targets of the Seven-Year Plan (1959-1965), providing for 8.6 percent annual increase in industrial output, will almost certainly be met ahead of schedule. We estimate that by 1965 total investment will reach about one-third of gross national product (GNP) as

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compared with the present US rate of about one-fifth of GNP. Only in agriculture, which is burdened by a heritage of errors and neglect, will the regime fall well short of its goals, but even here we estimate that output will increase by about 3 to 4 percent per year. The GNP of the USSR in 1959 was somewhat less than half that of the US; it is growing about twice as fast and by 1965 will probably be somewhat more than half of US GNP.

6. GNP is a rough measurement, however. More important in terms of world power competition are the uses to which economic resources are put. The USSR maintains a defense effort judged to be of about the same magnitude as that of the US. The dollar value of Soviet investment in industry in 1959 exceeded the highest US figure, achieved in 1957. For purposes related to national power -- defense, science, foreign economic and political operations -- the Soviets are increasingly in a position to assign resources freely and without agonizing self-denials. That they are able to provide the resources for national power on a scale equivalent to the US is due to the virtually absolute command which the leadership has over the disposal

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of resources. It will continue to give the highest priority to purposes related to national power in order to "overtake and surpass" the US. The Soviet regime has bought economic growth and military strength at the expense of the living standards of the Soviet people. But its resources are now great enough so that it feels able to provide for improved living standards also. The consumption level remains low but we estimate that per capita increases will occur over the next five years at the respectable rate of four percent annually. The Soviet challenge in the economic field will be increasingly formidable, not because the USSR has any chance of overtaking the US standard or style of living, but because Soviet resources for the competition in power are already great and will continue to grow rapidly.

Military Aspect

7. As indicated, military power has one of the first claims upon Soviet resources. Our estimates on the development of Soviet military power until 1965 are far less certain than those on the Soviet economy. This is partly due to unpredictable developments during a period of rapid change in military technology. It is

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due more to gaps in certain kinds of critical information about Soviet military programs. Although in recent years the Soviets have released fuller economic data than previously, on essential matters in the military field they continue to maintain a policy of extreme secrecy, which they evidently view as a major military asset in itself.

8. The most significant development in the military field during the period of this estimate will be the USSR's emergence from strategic inequality, primarily through the buildup of an ICBM force, and also through development of its defense systems against nuclear attack. The overcoming of an inferiority under which the Soviets have operated throughout the postwar period is already having a profound effect on Soviet attitudes and policy. It inspires the confidence remarked upon above, has emboldened the Soviets to challenge the West on a vital issue like Berlin, and has led them to engage the West in other areas around the world formerly conceded to be beyond the reach of Soviet power.

9. The Soviet leaders will not be content with the gains in military power they have made. They will

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seek, by intensive research and development through the years ahead, as well as by equipping their forces with advanced weapons as these become available, to acquire an advantage over the West. If they succeed, they will press their advantage ruthlessly, though still within what they would consider to be the limits of tolerable risk to their own rule and system. It seems quite clear that in their present view both sides are deterred from the deliberate initiation of general war as a rational course of action. Moreover, with the weapons systems now on hand or likely to be available during the next few years, the Soviets probably do not count on acquiring an advantage so decisive as to permit them to launch general war under conditions which would not gravely menace their regime. Nevertheless, they are building their nuclear striking power with vigor, and we believe that they will build a substantial missile force. What we can learn of Soviet ideas suggests that their long-range striking capability is thought of primarily in terms of deterrence, and of employment should the Soviets

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finally conclude that deterrence had failed, rather than in terms of the deliberate initiation of general war.* The Soviet missile force will also constitute an important means of political pressure, even though it is never used in actual combat.

10. In order to deal more effectively with the continuing bomber threat the Soviets are incorporating a large number of surface-to-air missiles into their air defense. They are now also doing large-scale research and development on antimissile systems in the hope of obtaining an advantage in this critical aspect of the future weapons balance. By the period 1963-1966 they will probably begin to deploy such a system, though its effectiveness is uncertain. Soviet research and development effort will probably also focus on the new threat presented by Polaris.

* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes that the evidence of offensive missile and bomber production and deployment shows a definite intent by the Soviet rulers to achieve a clear military superiority at the earliest practicable date. He feels we are entering a very critical twenty-four month period in which the USSR may well sense it has the advantage. The Soviet leaders may press that advantage and offer the US the choice of war or of backing down on an issue heretofore considered vital to our national interests.

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11. Partly as a result of the increased security the Soviets feel they have gained from their development of a variety of offensive and defensive missiles, they have announced a major personnel reduction in their forces, from about 3.6 to about 2.5 million men by the end of 1961. Barring a serious deterioration in the international situation, we believe the cut will be substantially carried out. We believe that tactical aviation has already been cut by one-half and naval aviation by two-thirds, the latter primarily through elimination of the fighter arm. However, the main weight of the cut will fall on the very large ground forces. Even with the reduction, the Soviets will still have substantial field ground forces: we estimate nearly 1.5 million men organized in 65 divisions averaging two-thirds strength and some 60 cadre divisions at about one-fourth strength. The submarine force will become even more than it is today the primary component of the Soviet Navy, and will include nuclear and missile-carrying types suitable for strategic attack.

12. In sum, the USSR will continue to develop formidable military strength despite the personnel

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reduction. The Soviet military posture is designed primarily, we believe, to deter general war but also to fight such a war if necessary.* Equally, it is intended to bolster the USSR's power position and thereby to promote its general policies. Soviet capabilities for limited war in areas close to Bloc borders are obviously great, but for conflict in more distant areas they are comparatively slight. We do not believe that the USSR intends as a matter of policy to conduct limited war at remote ranges. However, we do not exclude that, with their current tendency to political involvement in remoter areas, the Soviets may seek to develop a greater capacity for intervening militarily, even if only to establish a military presence, in such areas. A really effective ability to do this would presumably depend heavily upon acquisition of base rights and facilities under friendly political arrangements.

* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, believes the Soviets seek a clear military superiority. See his footnote to paragraph 9.

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Scientific Aspect

13. The Soviets obviously understand that science has become one of the key fronts in the world struggle, not only because of its relations to military capability but also because it is a major element in great power prestige. The scale of their effort, thanks to the heavy investment they made in training scientists in past years, is probably now roughly on a par with that of the US, at least in some fields of the basic sciences and in critical areas related to weapons technology. Presumably the scope of Soviet scientific activity will broaden as needs in these first priority areas are met. The quality of Soviet scientific work in many fields is now such that achievements conferring great prestige are as likely to occur in the USSR as in any other country.

Political Aspects

14. It is in estimating the political aspect of future developments within the Soviet Bloc that the greatest imponderables intrude. The political system within the USSR itself is stable, and it will almost

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certainly retain its totalitarian features. The regime will not be openly challenged by the Soviet people who, even though many of them view it with apathy and ideological disillusionment, are in general hopeful for improvement in the conditions of their life and patriotically moved by the USSR's achievements and its position of world power. If there is change in the Soviet political system it will come from the higher levels of the party and government. In the relatively small group which constitutes the real governing class there are some signs of a desire for more regular participation in policy making, and for more reliance in policy execution on professional expertise instead of party agitational methods. While Khrushchev has avoided or been obliged to avoid the arbitrariness of Stalin, among those who surround him there are probably some who would like to move still further away from the domination of one man in the system. Given Khrushchev's age and state of health he may not survive as the dominating leader throughout the next five years. His successor at the head of the Soviet Government and party may be more restricted in the personal power he wields, but in any

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totalitarian system political developments are likely to depend heavily on the qualities and style which individual personalities bring to the exercise of great and arbitrary power.

15. In the area of political developments within the Communist Bloc it is the evolution of relations among the Bloc states which raises the greatest uncertainties at present. In general, the states of Eastern Europe have gained in economic strength and political stability in recent years, despite the continuing alienation and resentment of large parts of their populations. There seems little doubt that, with the more flexible and indirect methods of control the USSR has been employing since 1956-1957, it will be able to maintain a generally effective hegemony. However, China has raised a fundamental challenge to Soviet leadership of the Bloc. Even if some way is found to resolve the issues posed by China's desire to pursue a more militant policy toward the West, it raises the serious question as to whether the long-term unity of the Bloc under Soviet leadership can be maintained. We believe that there is a trend away from monolithic unity, and that in the long run, if China is to remain within the

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Bloc, a looser relationship is bound to develop. The future course of Sino-Soviet relations will obviously have profound consequences for the nature of the challenge which communism poses for the Free World. The West may be faced either with new dangers or new opportunities, or
*
both.

SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD

16. The general Soviet strategy for carrying on the world struggle in the present phase rests on two propositions. The first is that general nuclear war must be avoided because the costs in physical damage and social disintegration would be intolerable. The second is that the world position and power of the "imperialist" states

* The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff, believe that, in spite of Sino-Soviet frictions, the USSR and Communist China will continue to be firmly allied against the West and will render one another mutual support whenever an important interest of one or the other is threatened by the non-Communist world.

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can be undermined by a persistent and aggressive campaign waged by methods short of war -- political struggle, economic and scientific competition, subversion. Political struggle takes the form of a constant agitation designed to capture and organize in broad mass movements the sentiments which focus on the great issues of the current period -- peace, disarmament, anticolonialism, social justice, economic development. By manipulating these issues and by dramatizing the growth of Soviet power, the Soviets are also trying to align the governments of the underdeveloped and uncommitted states with the Bloc, and against the West. The Soviet leaders hope that the result will be a progressive isolation and loss of influence for the Western Powers, divisions among them, and a decline in their ability to deal effectively with threats to their interests. This is what the Soviets mean by "peaceful coexistence" -- a strategy to defeat the West without war.

17. This is not strategy which aims immediately at the revolutionary seizure of power by Communist parties and the setting up of Communist regimes. The Soviets know that there are few countries where the Communists

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are strong enough to undertake such action, and where they themselves could count upon being able to deter intervention by non-Communist forces. The "peaceful coexistence" strategy is aimed mainly at gradually eliminating Western and building up Soviet influence around the world. The Soviets naturally expect that conditions will thereby be created which are favorable to the growth of Communist movements and which will sooner or later permit the latter to acquire state power peacefully, or by revolutionary action if necessary. Even though overt seizure of power is not now the main aim of the Soviet strategy, over a five-year period situations might arise where the gains from such action would seem important enough to the Soviets so that they would be willing to depart from their present general line.

18. The general line of Soviet policy estimated in the two preceding paragraphs falls within a range which excludes, on the one hand, the deliberate assumption of serious risks of general war, and on the other, abandonment of active struggle against the West. Within these

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limits we believe that the Soviet leaders will display both militancy and conciliation, at various times and in various proportions as seems to them most profitable. However, the Chinese challenge to Soviet authority involves basic questions of foreign policy, and brings severe pressure to bear on Soviet policy decisions. In trying to adjust to Chinese demands for more militancy and risk-taking, it is possible that the Soviets may go farther in this direction, and do so more consistently, than they would otherwise do. On the other hand, if the Soviets should conclude that the Chinese were pushing them towards unacceptable dangers, they might feel compelled as a matter of temporary expediency to attempt a greater degree of stabilization in their relations with the West than they would otherwise consider, though without altering their long-term aim of establishing communism throughout the world.^{1/}

^{1/} The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, agrees that the Chinese challenge to Soviet authority will, undoubtedly, have its effect on Soviet policy toward the non-Communist world; however, he believes that the relationship of Soviet military power vis-a-vis the United States is the essential determinant. Further, as expressed in his footnote to paragraph 9, he believes that should the Soviets feel that they have achieved a clear military superiority, they are likely to adopt policies involving serious risks of general war.

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19. As a general rule, we believe that the Soviets would consider that the initiation of limited war with Soviet or even Bloc forces entailed unacceptably high risks and political liabilities. However, it cannot be excluded that situations will appear in which they would conclude that some prize was great enough, and the military and political risks acceptable enough, to justify resort to such action. The Soviets are aware, however, that any limited war carries a danger of expanding into general war. We believe, therefore, that their attitude toward the involvement of Soviet or Bloc forces in local and limited war will be a very cautious one, and will be governed by their estimate of the risks and advantages, both political and military, in each situation. Even so, there is always a possibility that they may miscalculate risks.

20. Negotiations with the Western Powers over outstanding issues are conceived by the Soviets as one of the modes of waging the struggle of "peaceful coexistence." They hope that the pressures which they attempt to build up against the West will result in concessions at the negotiating table. Intervals of more accommodating behavior and appeals for relaxed tensions are intended to encourage the making of such concessions. We expect this alternation

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of pressure and accommodation to be the regular pattern of Soviet behavior with respect to negotiation in the years ahead. Since the U-2 incident in May 1960 the Soviets have adopted a hostile and aggressive attitude which has made effective negotiation impossible. We believe that within the next six months or so the Soviets are likely to moderate this attitude and to attempt to get negotiations started again. It is also possible, however, that on the Berlin issue, where negotiation has so far failed to get them results, they will resort to intensified pressure and threats in an attempt to force the West into high-level negotiations under more unfavorable conditions.

21. We do not believe that the Soviets have a five-year plan for foreign policy in the sense that they set themselves particular goals to accomplish within a set time. Their policy is marked rather by an extraordinary opportunism, and in recent years by rapidity of response and vigor in execution. Over the next five years they probably look for new developments favorable to their interests to occur in a number of areas, but more especially in Africa, Latin America, Japan, Indonesia, and Iran. They probably intend to give particular attention to establishing a diplomatic and economic presence in Africa,

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to stimulating and exploiting movements on the Castro model in Latin America, and to encouraging the growth of a radical anti-American mass movement in Japan. Above all, however, they intend to build up their base of power within the Bloc itself, in the belief that during the next several years they can considerably improve their relative power position vis-a-vis the West. They believe that if they do so, more opportunities for Communist expansion, and more readily exploitable ones, will open up for them.

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