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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

10 December 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: NIE-64 (Part I) Supplement: Soviet Bloc Capabilities,
Through Mid-1954

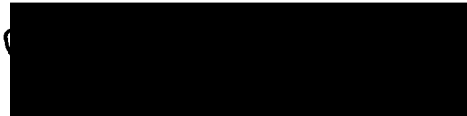
1. The attached draft estimate has been approved by the Board of National Estimates pursuant to a consideration of it by the IAC representatives.

2. This estimate was produced at the request of the NSC Senior Staff. The basic approach used in producing this estimate was to take NIE-64 (Part I), "Soviet Bloc Capabilities Through Mid-1953", and make alterations necessary to make the mid-1953 estimate valid through mid-1954.

3. The Board suggests that distribution of this estimate be limited to the NSC Senior Staff and member agencies of the IAC.

4. This estimate will be considered by the IAC at 10:30 Thursday, 11 December.

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Executive Secretary

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DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 6 1991
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 10/19/81 REVIEWER: 6514

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

10 December 1952

SUBJECT: NIE-64 (Part I) SUPPLEMENT: SOVIET BLOC CAPABILITIES,
THROUGH MID-1954

THE PROBLEM

To extend through mid-1954 the estimates of Soviet Bloc^{1/} capabilities for political and military warfare made in NIE-64 (Part I).

(This estimate does not undertake to speculate regarding the effects on Bloc capabilities of the many possible developments in the Korean war.)

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Bloc continues to possess a significant quantitative superiority over the Western Powers in forces in being and in conventional ground and air armament.

^{1/} The Soviet Bloc consists of the USSR, the European Satellites, Communist China, Outer Mongolia, North Korea, and Viet Minh. The Kremlin also controls the international Communist movement outside the Bloc countries.

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2. The Soviet economy is much better prepared now to support a major war effort than it was in 1940.

3. The principal emphasis of the recent Bloc military program has apparently been upon enlarging the atomic stockpile, upon improving Bloc defenses, particularly against air attack, and upon strengthening Satellite and Chinese Communist forces. We believe that this emphasis will continue throughout the period of this estimate. We also believe that the Bloc military forces will not increase greatly in size, although they will improve significantly in combat effectiveness.

4. We estimate that the USSR will probably have a stockpile of 190 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield) by mid-1954. (The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.) It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1953. During the period of this estimate (to mid-1954), however, there is the possibility of advanced research and field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions.

5. The Soviet forces now stationed in Eastern Europe are in an advanced state of readiness for war and can attack with little or no warning. However, the Bloc forces in Eastern Europe would

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almost certainly require substantial reinforcements in Soviet ground and air forces before they could sustain major offensive operations.

6. We estimate that the Bloc has the capability to undertake concurrent large-scale operations in continental Europe, the Middle East, and mainland Asia. The Bloc could rapidly reinforce with Chinese Communist and Soviet forces the Communist forces now in Korea, and at the same time undertake an invasion of Japan by Soviet forces.

7. The USSR is capable of undertaking the delivery of its full stockpile of atomic weapons against targets in the US and its overseas bases. It also has the capability of undertaking sustained air offensives against the UK, most of continental Europe, most of the Middle East, and Japan, with the intensity of individual offensives varying according to the number undertaken concurrently.

8. The Bloc air defense organization has the capability for vigorous opposition to an air offensive against the principal Soviet centers. However, despite marked improvements in the Bloc air defense system (especially in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and Manchuria), deficiencies will remain throughout the period of this estimate.

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9. The USSR has the capability to undertake offensive submarine patrols and mining operations along most of the world's strategically vital sea lanes. The USSR has the capability to undertake short-haul amphibious operations in the seas adjacent to its own coasts.

10. Bloc political warfare is an important weapon which will continue to constitute a serious danger to the non-Communist world throughout the period of this estimate. The likelihood of an increase in Bloc political warfare capabilities is greatest in unstable areas, such as Southeast Asia and parts of the Middle East and Africa. These areas will continue to be particularly vulnerable to Bloc political warfare because of economic and social unrest, bitter racial and religious antagonisms, the widespread sentiment against "Western imperialism," and the ineffective leadership of many existing governments.

11. The Bloc could increase its exports to the non-Communist world within the period of this estimate. We estimate that even a slight increase of trade with the non-Communist world would constitute an important factor in political warfare.

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DISCUSSION

FACTORS AFFECTING BLOC CAPABILITIES

12. The Soviet regime is securely entrenched in power, and there is no apparent prospect of its control being threatened or shaken.

13. Soviet control over the Satellites will almost certainly remain virtually complete. It ensures the subservience and reliability of the governments, and continued economic and military contributions to the USSR from the Satellite area.

14. The Chinese Communist regime has firm control over mainland China, and there is little likelihood of its control being threatened or shaken by domestic forces within the period of this estimate. We believe that Communist China accepts Moscow leadership in the international Communist movement but retains some capability for independent action and a capability to exert influence upon the shaping of Communist policy in the Far East. The character of the current Sino-Soviet relationships will probably remain relatively constant throughout the period of this estimate.

15. The USSR is engaged in a large-scale research and development program. This includes both pure and applied research,

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with an emphasis upon applied research in fields of military application, especially atomic energy, electronics, jet aircraft, guided missiles, and submarines. In all of these fields, Soviet scientists and technicians have demonstrated a high level of proficiency.

16. The USSR has developed a very high capability for jamming radio transmissions up to and including HF bands. Soviet capabilities in related electronic fields indicate that they are now capable of developing equipment for jamming VHF and UHF bands. These capabilities constitute a serious threat to Western long-range and short-range military radio communications and navigation systems.

17. The gross national product of the Bloc has been increasing rapidly in the past few years.^{1/} Any calculation of its magnitude is necessarily subject to considerable error, and no meaningful comparison can be made with prewar years for the Bloc as a whole. However, provisional estimates indicate that the Bloc's gross national product in 1951 was roughly 20 percent higher than in 1949, and we believe that rapid growth will continue during the period of this estimate.

^{1/} This paragraph represents a substantial revision of the estimate of Soviet economic development to 1952 contained in NIE-64 (Part I). The revision has been made on the basis of research undertaken in connection with NIE-65. The results of this research are tentatively accepted by the IAC agencies for the purpose of this Supplement, subject to further study.

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- a. The economy of the USSR had recovered its prewar level of total production by 1948 and had surpassed that level by at least one-third in 1951. We estimate that the Soviet gross national product has been increasing at an annual rate of about 11 percent, and that it will continue to increase, although at a somewhat reduced rate, during the period of this estimate.
- b. The combined production of the Satellites constitutes approximately one-quarter of the Bloc's gross national product. We believe that the Satellite gross national product will increase at a rate approximating that of the USSR during the period of this estimate.
- c. The gross national product of Communist China is extremely difficult to estimate, but we believe that it represents less than 15 percent of the Bloc total. Communist China's gross national product is probably increasing at an annual rate of 3 to 5 percent, but its output of capital goods will continue to be a very small part of the Bloc total.

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18. The output of the Soviet economy does not approach that of the US economy, nor does the output of the Bloc economy as a whole approach that of the NATO states.^{1/} USSR gross national product in 1951 was about 30 percent that of the US, and the combined gross national product of the entire Bloc was about one-third that of the NATO countries. These disparities are being reduced, but there will be no significant change by mid-1954.

19. However, comparisons in terms of total output of all types of goods and services are misleading as indications of relative capacity to produce military equipment in peacetime. The traditional living standards and the controls prevailing within the Bloc enable the Bloc states to assign a much smaller proportion of total output to civilian consumption, particularly of scarce materials and goods, than is feasible in Western countries. Moreover, these living standards and controls also enable the Bloc to assign a higher proportion of its military outlay to production of actual military end-items than is feasible in the West.

^{1/} This paragraph represents a substantial revision of the estimate of Soviet economic development to 1952 contained in NIE-64 (Part I). The revision has been made on the basis of research undertaken in connection with NIE-65. The results of this research are tentatively accepted by the IAC agencies for the purpose of this Supplement, subject to further study.

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20. Since the end of World War II, the Bloc as a whole has devoted a much larger proportion of its gross national product to military purposes than the West. We believe that the USSR now devotes and will continue to devote roughly one-fifth of its national product to military expenditures. We also estimate that the quantity of resources which the USSR allocated to military production in 1952 equals the amount assigned in 1944, the peak year of Soviet war production.

21. The Soviet economy is much better prepared now to support a major war effort than it was in 1940. Under continued cold war conditions, the Bloc clearly has the capability of expanding its industrial base and of increasing military production. The Soviet economy is organized with a view to possible hostilities in the near future as well as in the more remote future. These two objectives compete to some extent in the allocation of resources.

22. The Kremlin places a high priority upon stockpiling reserves, not only of military end-items but of food, capital equipment, and materials needed for maintaining the economy under wartime conditions or other emergencies.

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23. The Bloc could increase its exports to the non-Communist world within the period of this estimate. We estimate that even a slight increase of trade with the non-Communist world would constitute an important factor in political warfare.

BLOC MILITARY STRENGTH

24. The Bloc continues to possess a significant quantitative superiority over the Western Powers in forces in being and in conventional ground and air armament. We estimate that the Bloc armed forces^{1/} now have:

- a. Approximately 8,750,000 men, of which about 4,450,000 are Soviet; 1,550,000 Satellite; 2,350,000 Chinese Communist; 290,000 North Korean; and 130,000 Viet Minh. (For more complete information on the number of regular forces and of security forces maintained by each Bloc State, see NIE-64 (Part I) Appendices, Appendix B, Section VI.)
- b. An actual strength of approximately 21,000 aircraft, including about 6,700 jet fighters and 900 piston

^{1/} For comment on the nature of the evidence available for estimates of Bloc armed force strength, see note at the end of this estimate.

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- medium bombers; an authorized strength of about 25,000 aircraft, including about 8,400 jet fighters and 1,150 piston medium bombers.
- c. A total of at least 164 major surface vessels and 361 submarines, including 103 long-range types.
 - d. A stockpile of 50 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield). (This estimate applies to mid-1952, not the date of publication for this report. The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.)
 - e. Large stocks of conventional weapons and equipment.

25. We estimate that the Bloc armed forces by mid-1954 will probably have:

- a. Approximately 9,400,000 men, of which about 4,520,000 will be Soviet; 2,000,000 Satellite; 2,450,000 Chinese Communist; 300,000 North Korean; and 130,000 Viet Minh.
- b. An authorized strength of about 26,700 aircraft, including about 13,000 jet fighters, 1,250 piston medium bombers, and possibly a few jet medium bombers.^{1/}

^{1/} The estimate on jet medium bomber production is based upon the Soviet technical capability to develop and produce such aircraft. There is no intelligence available to indicate that such aircraft are now in production.

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- c. A total of approximately 260 major surface vessels^{1/} and 471 submarines, including 153 long-range types.
- d. A stockpile of 190 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield). (The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.)

26. It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1953. During the period of this estimate (to mid-1954), however, there is the possibility of advanced research and field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions.

27. The over-all effectiveness of Bloc ground, naval, and air forces will increase by mid-1954 because of progressive modernization and standardization of weapons and equipment, the intensive training program, the growth of the Soviet atomic stockpile, and the increased combat efficiency of the Satellite forces.

28. The armed forces of the USSR and Communist China have remained relatively constant in size throughout the past two years, while those of the Satellites have grown rapidly. Recent Bloc

^{1/} This includes all naval vessel types down to and including coastal destroyers.

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military effort has apparently placed principal emphasis upon enlarging the atomic stockpile and upon improving Bloc defenses, particularly against air attack. The Bloc has also emphasized improvement of the quality of existing units and developing and marshaling the military strength of the Satellites.

29. The USSR maintains a large air defense system which not only includes the forces assigned to the Soviet air defense organization (PVO-Strany) but also has available to it the active air defense resources of the Army, tactical air forces, and Navy not otherwise committed, as well as the passive defense resources of the police and civilian organizations. The European Satellite and Communist Chinese air defenses add to and are integrated with the Soviet system. Despite significant improvements in the air defense system, there will probably continue to be insufficient numbers of trained and experienced pilots and operators, modern radar, heavy AA guns, and fighters designed specifically for all-weather interception to provide defense for all important areas. We estimate that by mid-1954 the numerical strength of the air defense forces will not change substantially. However, the effectiveness of the air defenses will improve through re-equipment and training.

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BLOC MILITARY CAPABILITIES

30. We estimate that the Bloc has the capability to undertake concurrent large-scale operations in continental Europe, the Middle East, and mainland Asia. The Bloc could rapidly reinforce with Chinese Communist and Soviet forces the Communist forces now in Korea, and at the same time undertake an invasion of Japan by Soviet forces.

31. The Soviet forces now stationed in Eastern Europe are in an advanced state of readiness for war and can attack with little or no warning. However, the Bloc forces in Eastern Europe would almost certainly require substantial reinforcements in Soviet ground and air forces before they could sustain major offensive operations.

32. The USSR has the capability of undertaking sustained air offensives against the UK, most of continental Europe, most of the Middle East, and Japan, with the intensity of individual offensives varying according to the number of offensives undertaken simultaneously. It is also capable of undertaking the delivery of its full stockpile of atomic weapons against targets in these areas and against targets in the US and its overseas bases.

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33. The Bloc air defense organization has the capability for vigorous opposition to an air offensive against the principal Soviet centers. However, despite marked improvements in the Bloc air defense system (especially in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and Manchuria), deficiencies will remain throughout the period of this estimate.

34. The Bloc has the capability to launch short-haul amphibious and airborne operations in the Baltic and Black Seas, along the northern coast of Norway, and in the northern Japan Sea, and to launch limited amphibious and airborne operations against Western Alaska.

35. The Soviet submarine force has the capability to undertake offensive patrols and mining operations along most of the world's strategically vital sea lanes and, possibly, simultaneously to launch guided missile attacks against targets on both the Atlantic and Pacific seaboard of the US. The Soviet Navy, including its air arm, has the capability to lay extensive mine fields to protect Soviet Satellite, and Chinese Communist harbors and sea routes, to mine the waters and harbors of the Baltic, Black, North, and Japan Seas, and to harass sea routes in these areas.

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36. The Chinese Communist and North Korean capabilities in Korea have increased substantially since the beginning of the armistice negotiations. If the present scale of operations continues, we believe that these capabilities will gradually improve during the period of this estimate. Communist ground forces in Korea have a high offensive potential and are capable of launching a major attack with little warning.^{1/}

37. Since the beginning of the Korean war, the Communist Air Force in China, which is believed to be made up of Chinese Communist, North Korean, and Soviet elements, has been built to an impressive size. The jet fighter units in the Korea-Manchuria-North China area are believed to be progressively improving. The capabilities of the CAF in China will remain during the period through mid-1953 largely limited to the air defense of North China, Manchuria, and North Korea under conditions of good visibility and to limited attacks against UN forces in Korea and adjacent waters. However, we believe that by mid-1954, the capabilities of this air force to extend its offensive operations beyond the present limited theater of operations will increase as a result of the introduction of an estimated 160 jet light bombers.

^{1/} For more complete information on this subject, see NIE-55/1: "Communist Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action in Korea," (30 July 1952).

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We believe that the CAF in China will continue to expand gradually during the period of this estimate but will remain entirely dependent upon the USSR for aircraft and equipment, spare parts, and technical supervision, and almost entirely dependent upon the USSR for aviation fuel and lubricants. Redeployment from the Manchuria area would be necessary for sustained air operations against Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

38. During the period of this estimate, Soviet and/or Chinese Communist forces in Asia will almost certainly continue to have the capability of conducting the following operations concurrently:

- a. Overrunning Hong Kong, Macao, Indochina, Burma, and Thailand if opposed only by the forces concurrently in these areas. ^{1/}
- b. Rapidly reinforcing with Chinese Communist and Soviet forces the Communist forces now in Korea, and at the same time of undertaking an invasion of Japan by Soviet forces.
- c. Attacking Western shipping in the Pacific by submarines and mines and by conducting

^{1/} A Chinese Communist invasion of Taiwan would almost certainly fail if US naval and air forces remain available to defend Taiwan.

air attacks and surface raids against Western bases and shipping in the western and northern Pacific.

ELEMENTS OF BLOC POLITICAL WARFARE STRENGTH

39. Political warfare plays an unusually important role for Communists, who consider military warfare only an extension of political warfare in their persistent campaign to undermine the strength of the non-Communist world. Bloc political warfare techniques include political and economic pressure, diplomatic action in the UN and elsewhere, propaganda and front activities, the action of Communist Parties and Communist Party controlled trade unions outside the Bloc, sabotage, exploitation of subversive and revolutionary movements and of civil wars, and psychological warfare.

40. The principal sources of strength upon which Bloc political warfare capabilities are based consist of the Bloc's military capabilities; the size, power, and centralized leadership of the Bloc; Communist doctrine; and the Communist international movement.

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41. We estimate that there are now 20,000,000 Communist Party members in the world, organized into 72 national parties. Most Party members live within the Bloc, but about 3,750,000 are scattered throughout the non-Communist world. These figures do not include the membership of the front organizations, trade unions, etc., which the national Communist Parties influence or control. The discipline and fervor of the Parties make them far more effective than their size alone indicates.

42. To serve the interests of the Bloc, the national Communist Parties in non-Communist countries seek to exploit economic, social, and nationalist grievances, to infiltrate government agencies and institutions, to provide espionage agents and saboteurs, to disseminate Bloc propaganda, to mobilize mass support for Bloc policies, to create pressure groups to influence local policy to the advantage of the Bloc, and to infiltrate and control trade unions and national labor organizations. They have shown particular skill in creating and controlling front organizations.

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BLOC POLITICAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES

43. Bloc political warfare is an important weapon which will continue to constitute a serious danger to the non-Communist world throughout the period of this estimate. The Communists and their allies will retain the capability to conduct undermining attacks on established regimes, to exploit national rivalries, to utilize minority groups and splinter political parties, and to capitalize upon economic, political, and military difficulties.

44. Throughout Western Europe, the Communist Parties since 1946 have suffered severe losses both in membership and prestige. However, the hard core of the Party has been preserved everywhere, and in most countries the party continues to influence large numbers of non-Communists.

45. The capability of Western European Communists to conduct strikes for political purposes has been sharply reduced. Nevertheless, the Communists will retain at least limited capabilities to interfere with defense production.

46. In the event of general war, the Communist parties would constitute a threat in Western Europe, especially in France and Italy, where large Communist parties and Communist trade union

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strength are reinforced by well-trained Communist quasi-military organizations. Communist capabilities for espionage, industrial sabotage, terrorism, and attacks against transportation and communications facilities and military installations would be substantial.

47. The likelihood of an increase in Bloc political warfare capabilities is greatest in unstable areas, such as Southeast Asia, and parts of the Middle East and Africa. These areas will continue to be particularly vulnerable to Bloc political warfare because of economic and social unrest, bitter racial and religious antagonisms, sentiment against "Western imperialism," and the ineffective leadership of many existing governments.

48. Within the Middle East, Bloc political warfare capabilities are greatest in Iran.^{1/} The Iranian situation contains so many elements of instability that it is impossible to estimate with confidence for more than a few months. However, we believe that throughout 1953 the Bloc agent in Iran, the Tudeh Party, is not likely to gain control of the government by infiltration or to develop the strength to overthrow the National Front by constitutional

^{1/} The estimates in this paragraph supercede the corresponding estimates made in NIE-75, "Probable Developments in Iran through 1953," (13 November 1952).

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means or by force. Unexpected events, such as a serious crop failure or a split in the National Front as a result of rivalry among its leaders, would increase Tudeh capabilities greatly. If present trends in Iran continue unchecked beyond the end of 1953, rising internal tensions and continued deterioration of the economy and of the budgetary position of the government are likely to lead to a breakdown of governmental authority and open the way for at least a gradual assumption of control by Tudeh.

49. We believe that during the period of this estimate Bloc political warfare capabilities in Southeast Asia will be largely determined by the degree of military pressure which the Viet Minh forces, with Communist Chinese advice and military assistance, bring to bear against the French and the Associated States in Indochina. While the odds now are against a decisive shift in the political and military balance of forces in Indochina, this balance might shift rapidly and adversely to Western interest. A Communist victory in Indochina would probably result in Communist control, by force or accommodation, of most or all of the Southeast Asian mainland countries, although not necessarily within the period of this estimate.

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50. In India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, the Communists will not have sufficient strength seriously to challenge governmental authority during the period of this estimate. However, they will be able to intensify vocal opposition and strengthen their party organization. If the Communist party of India should again emphasize the role of violence, its popular support would probably diminish and the government would almost certainly revive its earlier repressive measures.

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52. We estimate that during the period of this estimate the Communists will not be able to establish a Communist government anywhere in Latin America either by constitutional process or by revolution. In Guatemala, the only country in Latin America where Communists have power within the government, they are likely to maintain and may even increase their influence. In all major Latin American countries, the Communists will retain a substantial capability for sabotage, for spreading Bloc propaganda, and for stimulating anti-American sentiment in nationalist, intellectual, and organized labor groups.

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**NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE FOR
ESTIMATES OF BLOC ARMED STRENGTH**

The estimates of Bloc armed strength are based on information available as of 1 December 1952.

a. G-2 comment on the nature of the evidence available for estimates of Bloc ground force strength:

The estimates of strength of the Soviet and Satellite ground forces are believed to be of a fairly high order of reliability. These estimates are median figures; the strength of these ground forces varies during the year as classes are inducted and discharged. The Soviet, Satellite, North Korean, and Viet Minh division figures are of a high order of reliability. Intelligence on the strength of the ground forces of Communist China is fragile.

b. AFOIN comment on the nature of the evidence available for estimates of Bloc air force strength:

Estimates of Soviet air strength are derived from intelligence which is considered of acceptable reliability, but collection coverage is incomplete. Estimates of over-all size and composition of Soviet Air Forces are derived from identification of individual units and estimated Table of Organization and Equipment strengths authorized for the various types of air regiments. Current estimates of jet fighter and medium bomber strength are considered reasonably valid. While aircraft count data are limited, they support an estimate that the current average levels of actual strength for the various types of aircraft amount to the following percentages of authorized TO & E strength: for jet fighters, 80 - 85 percent; for piston medium bombers, 75 - 80 percent; and for all other types of aircraft, 90 - 95 percent.

c. ONI comment on the nature of the evidence available for estimates of Bloc naval strength:

Evidence confirming the existence of the major surface vessels is firm and accurate. Identification of individual ships as to name and pennant number has been supported by evidence from a number of sources. Reliable evidence confirms the existence of 86 percent of the submarines and supports the existence of the remainder. Evidence regarding the naval construction program is considered firm and accurate.

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