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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

26 November 1952

SUBJECT: NIE-64 (Part I) SUPPLEMENT: SOVIET BLOC CAPABILITIES,
THROUGH MID-1954^{1/} (For consideration by the Board)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet Bloc^{2/} capabilities for political and military warfare through mid-1954.

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 revisions in the basic text of NIE-64 (Part I) are indicated by the underlined text of this Supplement.

^{2/} 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 and upon improving Bloc defenses, particularly against air attack. 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 in combat effectiveness.

4. We estimate that the USSR will probably have a stockpile of 190 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton field) 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-1954. However, we believe that the USSR will continue to make progress toward a thermonuclear weapon and that field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions may take place by mid-1954.

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.

6. We estimate that the Bloc has the capability to undertake concurrent large-scale operations in continental Europe,

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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 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.

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.

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

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undertake short-haul amphibious operations in the seas adjacent to its own coasts.

10. The Communists almost certainly will not be capable of overthrowing any non-Communist government either by constitutional process or by revolution, except possibly in Iran.

10a. If Franco-Vietnamese military capabilities in Indochina remain equal in effective strength to those of the Viet Minh, we estimate that the Communists will not be capable of establishing a Communist government in Indochina during the period of this estimate. If Franco-Vietnamese military capabilities are substantially weakened, the prospects of a Viet Minh victory will be enhanced. Communist control of Indochina would probably result in the extension of Communist control to most or all of the Southeast Asian mainland countries, although not necessarily within the period of this estimate.

10b. We cannot estimate the effects on Communist capabilities in Asia during the period of this estimate of either a termination of the Korean war or an expansion of the present hostilities.

11. Bloc capabilities for political warfare will continue to constitute a serious danger for the non-Communist world

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throughout the period of this estimate. The Communist Parties in the non-Communist world -- with an estimated membership of 3,750,000 -- are tightly organized for action and form a world-wide network under Kremlin direction. Through this organization, the Kremlin is able to conduct undermining attacks on established regimes, to exploit national rivalries, to utilize minority groups and political factions, and to capitalize on economic, political, and military difficulties. The organizational effectiveness of the Parties makes them far more formidable than their numerical size alone indicates.

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 a 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, 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. We estimate that by mid-1954 the USSR will have developed and will be able to produce most of the types of electronic equipment required for modern warfare, although some may not be available in quantity.

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15a. 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.^{1/}

16. The gross national product of the Bloc has been increasing in the past two years. 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, we estimate that the Bloc's national product in 1951 was roughly _____ percent higher than in 1949.^{2/}

a. The economy of the USSR had recovered its prewar level of total production by 1948 and had surpassed that level by an estimated 33-45 percent in 1951. We estimate that the Soviet national product is increasing at an annual rate of 10-12 percent.

^{1/} This paragraph is taken from NIE-64 (Part I), Appendices, "Appendix A, paragraph 24-c-3."

^{2/} The estimates in paragraphs 16 and 17 are based on a re-examination of economic information by ORR.

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b. The combined production of the Satellites constitutes approximately one-fifth of the Bloc's national product.

c. The national product of Communist China is extremely difficult to estimate. Its non-agricultural output will continue to be an insignificant part of the Bloc total.

17. 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 compare with that of the NATO states. USSR gross national product in 1951 was about _____ that of the US, and the combined gross national product of the entire Bloc was about _____ percent that of the NATO countries. However, these disparities are being steadily reduced.

18. 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.

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19. 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 at least one-fifth of its national product to military expenditures. We estimate that the quantity of resources which the USSR will devote to military production in 1952 will equal the amount assigned in 1944, and that a considerably greater amount will be allocated to military production in 1954.

20. 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.

21. 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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22. 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 political warfare weapon.

BLOC MILITARY STRENGTH

23. 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.

b. An actual strength of approximately 21,000 aircraft, including about 6,700 jet fighters and 900 piston medium bombers; an authorized strength of about 25,000

^{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. ^WNot included in this draft but same as page 8 in NIE-64 (I)."⁷

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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.

24. We estimate that the Bloc armed forces by mid-1953 will probably have:^{1/}

a. Approximately 2,175,000 men, of which about 4,520,000 will be Soviet; 1,775,000 Satellite; 2,450,000 Chinese Communist; 300,000 North Korean; and 130,000 Viet Minh.

b. An authorized strength of nearly 26,000 aircraft, including about 10,350 jet fighters, 1,200 piston medium bombers, and possibly a few jet medium bombers.^{2/}

^{1/} These estimates, taken from NIE-64 (PART I), Soviet Bloc Capabilities through Mid-1953, Appendices, B-VI, are based on information received after the figures in NIE-64 (Part I), Soviet Bloc Capabilities through Mid-1953 (12 November 1952) went to press.

^{2/} 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 205 major surface vessels and 408 submarines, of which 122 will be long-range types.

d. A stockpile of 100 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield). (The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.)

2/a. 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. "See page 11, footnote 2."

c. A total of approximately 260 major surface vessels 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.)

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25. It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1954. However, we believe that the USSR will continue to make progress toward a thermonuclear weapon and that field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions may take place by mid-1954.

26. 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 armies.

27. 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 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.

28. The USSR maintains a large air defense system which not only includes the forces assigned to the Soviet air defense

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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 increase substantially, although the effectiveness of the air defenses will improve through re-equipment and training.

BLOC MILITARY CAPABILITIES

29. 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.

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30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. The Bloc has the capability to launch short-haul amphibious and airborne operations in the Baltic and Black

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Seas, along the northern coast of Norway, and in the northern Japan Sea, and to launch limited amphibious and airborne operations against Western Alaska.

34. 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 seaboards 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.

35. 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/}

^{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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36. 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 up to an impressive size. The jet fighter units in the Korean - Manchuria-North China area are believed to be progressively improving. The capabilities of the CAF in China are, and 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 the UN forces in Korea and adjacent waters. However, we estimate that the offensive capabilities of this air force will increase by mid-1954 as a result of the introduction of jet light bombers. We believe 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 supervisions, and almost entirely dependent upon the USSR for aviation fuel and lubricants.

37. 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:

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

ELEMENTS OF BLOC POLITICAL WARFARE STRENGTH

38. 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

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

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controlled trade unions outside the Bloc, sabotage, exploitation of subversive and revolutionary movements and of civil wars, and psychological warfare.

39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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

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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.

BLOC POLITICAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES

42. Bloc political warfare capabilities will continue to constitute a serious danger 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.

43. We estimate that during the period of this estimate the Bloc will not have the capability of establishing a Communist government through constitutional process or by revolution, except possibly in Iran.

43a. We cannot estimate the effects on Communist capabilities in Asia during the period of this estimate of either a termination of the Korean war or an expansion of the present hostilities.

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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 retain 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 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. We believe that Bloc political warfare capabilities in the Middle East and Africa will remain low throughout the period of this estimate, except in Iran. The Bloc has taken little positive action in this area, and most of the existing

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Communist Parties, which remain quite small, have been forced underground. However, continued deterioration in the power and capacity of traditional ruling groups and the failure of strong, new local leadership would increase the vulnerability of the area to Bloc political warfare. A continuing decline in Western power directly to control Middle Eastern and African affairs in this period would not inevitably lead to corresponding political advantages to the Bloc. Depending entirely on specific, local situations, forceful maintenance of a Western position might make local nationalists more receptive to Communist overtures; peaceful relinquishment of a Western position to a strong local government might encourage that local government to take responsible independent action.

48. The Bloc agent in Iran, the Tudeh Party, continues with its front organizations to present the only organized opposition to the present government. It has achieved some limited penetration of the Iranian armed forces and a somewhat greater penetration of the bureaucracy. Although the danger of serious Tudeh infiltration of the National Front and the government bureaucracy continues, we believe that Tudeh will not be capable during the period of this estimate to obtain control by this means or to seize control of the government by force or by con-

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stitutional means. Unexpected events, such as a serious crop failure or a split in the National Front as a result of the rivalry among its leaders, would increase Tudeh capabilities greatly.

48a. 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 might lead to a breakdown of government authority and open the way for at least a gradual assumption of control by Tudeh.

49. Internal Communist subversion does not pose a major immediate threat in any South Asian country. We estimate that the Communist Parties in this area will not have sufficient strength to challenge governmental authority within the period of this estimate, but that in India, Pakistan and Ceylon they will be able to intensify vocal opposition and strength 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. Communist capabilities in South Asia are greatest in the northern areas bordering the Bloc.

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49a. If part or all of mainland Southeast Asia should come under Communist control during the period of this estimate, the internal pressures for accommodation with Communism would increase, particularly in India.

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51. Bloc political warfare capabilities vary throughout Southeast Asia. They are greatest in Indochina. The Viet Minh is a powerful instrument of terror and control, and it retains considerable nationalist appeal. The Viet Minh forces, with Communist Chinese advice and military assistance, maintain heavy

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military pressure upon the French and the Associated States. We believe that the Viet Minh will retain these capabilities throughout the period of this estimate.

51a. If Franco-Vietnamese military capabilities in Indochina remain equal in effective strength to those of the Viet Minh, we estimate that the Communists will not be capable of establishing a Communist government in Indochina during the period of this estimate. If Franco-Vietnamese military capabilities are substantially weakened, the prospects of a Viet Minh victory will be enhanced. Communist control of Indochina would probably result in the extension of Communist control to most or all of the Southeast Asian mainland countries, although not necessarily within the period of this estimate.

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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