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SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND MAIN LINES OF POLICY THROUGH MID-1959



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SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND MAIN LINES OF POLICY THROUGH MID-1959¹

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet capabilities and the main lines of Soviet strategic policy through mid-1959.¹

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that the stability and authority of the Soviet regime will not be affected during the period of this estimate by conflicts for power or differences respecting policy within the ruling group. Soviet authority over the Satellites will almost certainly remain intact. There are potential conflicts of interest between the USSR and Communist China but we believe that during the period of this estimate the cohesive forces in the relationship will be far greater than the divisive forces.

2. The economic policy of the USSR will probably continue to place primary emphasis on the rapid development of heavy industry and war potential, though with more attention than in the past to development of agricultural and consumer goods production. The high rates of economic growth achieved in the immediate postwar years have been declining. We believe that the annual rate for the next two years will be about 6 or 6.5 percent and in 1956-1959 about 5 or 6 percent.

3. We believe that if current economic programs are carried on as planned Soviet

defense expenditures will have to remain approximately constant in terms of purchasing power, at least through 1955. However; military procurement, even if it does not rise above the high level reached in 1952 and maintained in 1953, will be sufficient for continuous qualitative improvement of the armed forces in weapons, equipment, and training. Apart from this general qualitative improvement, the most significant changes in Soviet military strength during the period of this estimate are likely to be as follows:

- a. Increase in the nuclear weapons stockpile;
- b. Increase in the capability to deliver these weapons by various methods;
- c. Improvement in weapons systems for air defense;

¹ Although this paper is concerned primarily with the USSR, strengths and capabilities of the other members of the Soviet Bloc (Communist China, Eastern European Satellites, East Germany, and North Korea) are referred to where these add significantly to Soviet power. Consideration is also given to possible Chinese Communist courses of action which may have a direct bearing on the main lines of Soviet policy.

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d. Increase in the long-range submarine force.

4. We believe that the Kremlin probably will continue, at least for a year or two, to avoid courses of action which in its judgment would clearly involve substantial risk of general war. Bloc leaders will try to foster and exploit political weaknesses and, as opportunity offers, armed insurrections within the non-Communist world. Soviet leaders probably believe that; by alternately easing the tension and applying political warfare pressure dexterously, they can increase the chances that in time there will arise new opportunities for Communist strategic advances without substantial risk of general war.

5. While the Kremlin may continue to follow generally its present lines of policy throughout the period of this estimate, it should be borne in mind that the progress being made by the USSR in the development of nuclear weapons, and the increasing Soviet capability to deliver these weapons, are changing the world power situation in important respects. Under these conditions Soviet rulers will almost certainly believe that, as Soviet nuclear capabilities increase, the aversion of the US and its allies to general war will correspondingly increase, and that the Kremlin will therefore have greater freedom of action to pursue its objectives without running substantial risk of general war. Thus the Kremlin will be increasingly ready to apply heavy pressure on the non-Communist world upon any signs of major dissension or weakness among the US and its allies. We believe, however, that the Kremlin will continue to be extremely reluctant to precipitate a contest in which the USSR would be subjected to nuclear attack. At the same

time, we believe that the Kremlin would not be deterred by the risk of general war from taking counteraction against an action by the US or its allies which the Kremlin considered an imminent threat to Soviet security. We believe that the extent to which the Kremlin uses the increased freedom of action which its increased nuclear capabilities appear to give it, and the success which it achieves, will depend primarily upon the determination, strength, and cohesiveness of the non-Communist world.

6. We believe the Chinese Communist leaders in general share these Soviet views about the world situation and about opportunities and methods of advancing Communist interests. During the period of this estimate, Communist China will probably be reluctant to undertake courses of action which it considers might involve substantial risk of provoking unlimited war with a major power. The major deterrents will be: (a) China needs time to consolidate the Communist state as well as to modernize her economy; (b) China's strong ground forces are limited in service and support units, China's expanding air force has certain limitations, and China's navy has extremely limited capabilities, and China will remain militarily dependent upon the USSR for logistical, air, and naval support; (c) China's industrial centers will be vulnerable; and (d) the margin of available resources over minimum domestic requirements will be narrow. However, China will probably counter with military force, to the full extent of its capability, any action which it considers to be a military threat to its borders or to constitute an imminent threat to its vital

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interests, accepting the risks of war inherent in such action.²

7. Both Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders probably feel that Southeast Asia offers particularly favorable opportunities for Communist expansion, not only because of the vulnerability of the states in the area, but because of the possibility of exploiting disagreements between the US and its allies. Continued Communist successes in Indochina, or the consolida-

tion of present Communist gains in Indochina, would probably lead the Chinese Communists to expand their efforts to subvert neighboring countries by political infiltration and covert support of local insurrections, though probably not by the commitment of identifiable combat units of Chinese Communist armed forces. The aggressiveness with which such a policy would be pursued would depend on the vigor and effectiveness of non-Communist reaction.

DISCUSSION

I. BASIC COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES AND BELIEFS

8. The regime now in power in the USSR, or any that is likely to succeed it, almost certainly will continue for the indefinite future to consider its basic objective to be the consolidation and expansion of its own power, internally and externally. In pursuing this policy most Soviet leaders probably envisage ultimately: (a) the elimination of every world power center capable of competing with the USSR; (b) the spread of Communism to all parts of the world; and (c) Soviet domination over all other Communist regimes.

9. Soviet leaders probably are also committed to the following propositions concerning the expansion of the power of the USSR:

a. The struggle between the Communist and the non-Communist worlds is irreconcilable,

with one system eventually destroying the other;

b. This struggle may go on for a long time, with periods of strategic retreat possibly intervening before the final Communist triumph;

c. The struggle between the Communist and the non-Communist worlds will not necessarily involve general war;

d. During the period of "coexistence of the two camps" of Communism and capitalism, the Communists must steadily build up the economic and military strength of the USSR and its Satellites while trying to divide and weaken the non-Communist world.

II. SOVIET POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND THE STABILITY OF THE REGIME

10. The regime committed to these basic beliefs is controlled by the small group of less than 10 men in the Presidium (formerly Politburo) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Most of this same group of men exercise authority in governmental policy-making through their ranking positions in the Council of Ministers, the formal seat of executive authority in the USSR. Their joint control over the apparatus of Soviet power is absolute, and the primacy of the regime's interests continues to be enforced rigidly by elaborate party, government, and police controls. The regime may exercise its police powers somewhat more moderately and

² The Director of Intelligence, USAF, believes that paragraph 6 should read as follows:

"We believe that Chinese Communist leaders in general share these Soviet views about the world situation and about opportunities and methods of advancing Communist interests. Communist China will probably not choose knowingly any course of action likely to expose its fundamental national strengths in war with a major power. However, we believe that Communist China's strength for conducting various kinds of warfare are such, and the motives and judgment of its leaders are such as to make Communist China's courses of action dangerously unpredictable under outside pressure of any appreciable magnitude."

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less arbitrarily than in the past, but this restraint would derive from conviction that the regime can best attain its domestic objectives in this way, not from any fear of popular disapproval or any reluctance to use force if necessary to maintain government authority.

11. The most powerful Soviet leader appears to be G. M. Malenkov, ranking member in both the Communist Party Presidium and the Council of Ministers. Party First Secretary N. S. Khrushchev has risen rapidly, particularly since the elimination of Beria, and may now be on a level with Malenkov. Probably, however, neither Malenkov nor Khrushchev, nor any of the other Soviet leaders, is currently in a position as an individual to exercise power independently of the group. The party has so thoroughly penetrated the security police, government machinery, and armed forces that independent action by any one of these organizations at the command of an individual Soviet leader is nearly impossible. We therefore believe it most unlikely that any struggle for power among Soviet rulers will lead to overt or widespread civil strife.

12. While such a system of joint authority in a totalitarian society tends to be unstable, a balance of power among the various leaders may, nevertheless, last for some time, especially if most of them feel that their interests require its preservation. Now that power has been successfully transferred after Stalin's death and Beria has been efficiently disposed of, the Soviet regime may continue with something comparable to the current *modus operandi* for some time. Changes may take place in the composition of the ruling group or in the relative power positions of its members; one man may even succeed in gaining absolute power. We do not believe, however, that any significant disruption or weakening of the system of Soviet power would accompany such shifts in the roles of leading personalities.

13. We believe that whatever conflicts for power or differences respecting policy may develop within the ruling group are unlikely during the period of this estimate to affect the stability of the regime or its authority within the country. Moreover, we believe the regime will not be significantly impaired in

its ability to arrive at policy decisions and carry them out effectively. These policies and their implementation will continue to reflect the fundamental agreement which evidently obtains among the leaders concerning the basic objectives of the Communist regime.

III. SOVIET-SATELLITE RELATIONS

14. The appearance of new leadership in Moscow has had no apparent effect on the character of the relations between the USSR and its Satellite states in Eastern Europe. We believe that Soviet authority over the Satellite regimes will remain intact during the period of this estimate. The existence of widespread political discontent and serious difficulties in building up the Satellite economies will continue to delay the process of Sovietization of the area. However, during the next five years the Satellite contribution to Soviet power will gradually increase. Soviet control will continue to depend primarily on the presence or proximity of Soviet armed forces, and in the absence of general war popular dissatisfaction almost certainly will not develop beyond the stage of sporadic noncooperation.

IV. SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

15. The relations of the USSR with Communist China are markedly different from those prevailing between the USSR and any other Communist country. Communist China is more a Soviet ally than a Satellite. It possesses some capability for independent action, possibly even for action which the USSR might disapprove but which it would find difficult to repudiate. However, the main outlines of Communist policy in Asia are probably jointly determined by Moscow and Peiping. While the Soviet voice presumably remains preponderant, Communist China appears to be increasing its stature within the Sino-Soviet partnership. Soviet propaganda and diplomacy have recently given great emphasis to China's claim to an acknowledged position in international affairs, and the USSR has given evidence of a willingness to have Communist China assume greater responsibilities in furthering Communist interests in Asia. In particular Communist China seems to have an increasingly important role in the execu-

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tion of Communist policy in North Korea and Indochina.

16. The national interests of the USSR and Communist China are in some cases conflicting, and constitute potential sources of friction between the two powers. We believe, however, that throughout the period of this estimate the cohesive forces in the Sino-Soviet relationship will be far greater than the divisive forces. The USSR and Communist China share a common ideology. Both of them regard the US as the chief obstacle to their objectives, and consider that their interests are threatened by US policy and power. Moreover, each partner profits at the present time from its alliance with the other. Communist China receives essential Soviet political, military, and economic support and assistance. Soviet leaders recognize in China a valuable ally, which provides the USSR not only military strength and defense in depth in the Far East, but also a base for further advancing Communist aims in Asia.

V. SOVIET ECONOMIC GROWTH

17. The USSR has maintained its basic policy of forced-draft economic expansion throughout the postwar period, reaching approximately prewar levels of output in 1948 and steadily expanding in nearly every field since that time. The rate of growth of the Soviet economy, however, has declined in the past five years. From 1948 through 1950 Soviet gross national product (GNP) increased at an average annual rate of approximately 10 percent, but this rate fell off to about 6 or 7 percent per annum in the three-year period 1950-1953 and is estimated to have been only about 5 percent in the year 1953. The unusually high rate of growth through 1950 and the slower rate of growth thereafter were due to several factors, chief among which were: (a) during the earlier period the Soviet economy was still being reconstructed and hence capacity was brought into operation by comparatively little investment; (b) average growing conditions in agriculture were more favorable in 1949 and 1950 than in 1951 and 1953; and (c) the nonagricultural labor force grew less rapidly after 1950 than in the 1948-1950 period. In addition, the rate of growth of

Soviet GNP in 1953 was reduced as a result of the adjustments required by the revisions of economic plans introduced in that year.

18. It is estimated that in the next two years the rate of growth of the Soviet economy will be about 6 or 6.5 percent per annum and that in the period 1956-1959 it will decline to about 5 or 6 percent per annum. The higher rate of growth in the near term is expected to result from the resumption of a high rate of increase in total investment, including additional investment in the traditionally lagging sectors of the economy — agriculture and consumers' goods industries. On the other hand, the rate of growth in the period 1956-1959 will be somewhat retarded, in part because of a decline in the growth of the labor force resulting from the low birth rate during World War II. Even so, the average annual growth rate for the entire period of this estimate will be nearly double the long-range average annual increase in GNP of the US economy of 3 percent, and substantially above the annual increase of just over 4 percent which the US economy has shown in the 1948-1953 period.

19. Trends for the USSR determine the general character of economic growth rates for the whole Soviet Bloc. Even though the rate of growth of Bloc GNP declines, this rate will almost certainly continue to exceed that of the US and NATO powers. The US-NATO growth rate for GNP is estimated to have been 2.8 percent per year during the first half of the twentieth century. If the latter rate should continue throughout the period of this estimate, then the ratio of Soviet to US national products would increase from about 33 percent in 1953 to about 40 percent in 1959, and the ratio of Bloc to US-NATO national products would increase from about 38 percent to about 45 percent, respectively. However, the absolute difference between the total product of the Bloc and that of US-NATO (as well as between the USSR and the US) would be somewhat greater at the end of the period than it is at present.

VI. TRENDS IN SOVIET ECONOMIC POLICY

20. The present regime in the USSR has not fundamentally changed the traditional Soviet economic policy of placing primary emphasis

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on the rapid development of heavy industry and war potential. The new regime has, however, devoted a great deal of its attention and energies to a revision of current economic plans aimed at speeding up the production of agricultural commodities, especially foodstuffs, and manufactured consumers' goods. Soviet leaders have stated that this goal is to be achieved without decreasing the tempo of heavy industrial development, but they apparently intend, at least for the next two years, not to increase defense outlays above the high level reached in 1952 and maintained in 1953. This modification of Soviet economic programs is designed to overcome the lag in the growth of certain sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture, and to bring about a better balanced economic growth over the long run.

21. The promise of Soviet leaders to increase the volume of consumers' goods is being implemented by a serious effort to fulfill or modestly exceed the quotas in the Five-Year Plan as set forth in 1950. If successful, the regime would thus reverse the persistent trend of recent years whereby this sector of the Soviet economy slipped well below planned levels as a result of the priority in the allocation of economic resources granted to heavy industry and defense production. The heart of the new economic program is the effort to increase agricultural output by: (a) providing greater incentives to the peasant population in the form of goods and payments; (b) channeling greater capital investment to agriculture in the form of mechanical draft power, machinery, fertilizer, and building materials; (c) providing the farms with an ample supply of qualified technicians; (d) improving farm organization and practices; and (e) bringing under cultivation vast areas of semiarid virgin land in the eastern USSR and central Asia.

22. An important concern of the Soviet regime is that the inadequacy of agricultural production has been a critical contributing factor in the slowdown in the rate of growth of Soviet industrial labor productivity. The Soviet Union has been getting more and more out of its industrial labor force each year, but the annual increases are getting smaller and smaller. The new economic program aims at

increasing the urban supply of food and other consumer goods and — with this incentive for industrial workers — steadily raising the level of labor productivity in Soviet industry. The new agricultural program of greater incentives and increased investment may mark the first step along lines of economic development that Soviet leaders will find it advisable to pursue for a number of years. They will almost certainly continue them through 1955 and in view of the likelihood that achievements will fall far short of plan goals, they may continue them during the whole period through 1959.

23. We believe that agricultural production is unlikely (even with normal weather) to increase by more than about 3 percent annually during the period 1954–1959, making a total increase of 15–20 percent for the whole period 1950–1959 as contrasted with the original Five-Year Plan goal of about 50 percent increase for the period 1950–1955. Even so, the annual increment to the total Soviet gross national product will be large enough to permit moderate increases in standards of living and greater investment in enterprises producing consumers goods (including agriculture) without jeopardizing heavy industrial growth or the maintenance of a high level of military expenditure.

VII. EFFECT OF MODIFIED ECONOMIC PROGRAM ON SOVIET MILITARY EXPENDITURES

24. We believe that if the new economic program is carried on as planned, Soviet defense expenditure will have to remain approximately constant in terms of purchasing power, at least through 1955. Judging by the pattern of budgetary allotments, Soviet annual defense expenditure for 1954–1955 will be approximately the same as for 1952–1953, whereas it increased more than 50 percent between 1950 and 1952. We believe that Soviet defense outlays of all categories in 1953 amounted to about 13 to 16 percent of total Soviet GNP and that the proportion will slightly diminish for at least two or three years and possibly through mid-1959. In any case, over-all war potential will steadily increase as a result of the growth of the economy.

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VIII. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES OF THE SOVIET BLOC

25. Soviet scientific and technological capabilities are sufficiently well developed to provide effective support to industrial and military research and development. At present, the scientific assets of the USSR (the number and quality of trained personnel, facilities, equipment, and financial support) are less than those of the US, and the assets of the Bloc as a whole are far less than those of the West. The consistently strong support given to the development of Soviet science and technology has resulted, especially since World War II, in a rapid increase in Soviet capabilities in this area. We believe that military requirements will continue to have a high priority in the allocation of Soviet scientific resources during the period of this estimate.

IX. MILITARY STRENGTH³ AND WEAPONS DEVELOPMENTS

26. In the postwar period the USSR has maintained its armed forces at high levels of strength and combat-readiness. During the period of this estimate military procurement, even if continued at the 1952-1953 rate, will be sufficient for continuous qualitative improvement in weapons, equipment, and training. Apart from this general qualitative improvement, the most significant changes in Soviet military strength during the period of this estimate are likely to be as follows:

- a. Increase in the nuclear weapons stockpile;
- b. Increase in the capability to deliver these weapons by various methods;
- c. Improvement in weapons systems for air defense;
- d. Increase in the long-range submarine force.

Nuclear Weapons

27. For an estimate of the status of Soviet nuclear research and nuclear weapons stockpiles for the period 1954 through 1957, reference should be made to NIE 11-3A-54.

³ See Appendix for tables giving estimated strengths of Soviet Bloc ground, air, and naval forces.

28. There is no evidence available which indicates the course that the Soviet atomic energy program will take during the period 1957 through 1959, nor are there any specific parameters which can be considered as limiting on the growth of the program during this period. Nevertheless, long-range extrapolations can be carried out on the basis of assumptions of the growth pattern the program might follow during the period in question.

29. Alternate assumptions, which indicate a range of growth capabilities are:

- a. No expansion of Soviet fissionable materials production facilities after 1957; or
- b. Continued expansion of Soviet fissionable materials production facilities after 1957 at the same rate as estimated in NIE 11-3A-54 for the period 1954 to mid-1957; or
- c. Expansion of the Soviet program after 1957 at a rate which will increase its requirement for uranium to approximately 7,000 to 10,000 tons per year by 1964.

30. The Soviet fissionable materials stockpiles estimated for 1959 on the basis of above assumptions can be expressed in terms of weapon technology indicated by their 1953 tests. Examples of such conversion follows:

	1959	Assumption	Assumption	Assumption
		A	B	C
(1) Unboosted weapons				
40 KT				
each		1,250	1,355	1,700
Total yield (million tons TNT)		50.	54.	68.
OR				
(2) Boosted U-235 1,000 KT each				
Boosted PU 60 KT				
each		132	145	168
Boosted PU 5 KT				
each		350	375	510
Total yield (million tons TNT)		1,050	1,125	1,525
		158.	172.	206.

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31. The alternate assumptions on which the above table is based do not consider the possibility of rapid technological advances in the production of fissionable materials, nor do they reflect major advances in weapons development which must be anticipated. Developments in thermonuclear weapons with yields well in excess of one million tons of TNT, which could possibly be tested during 1954, could increase the total energy yield obtainable from the Soviet fissionable materials stockpile by a factor of five to twenty-five over that in example 2. In addition, Soviet nuclear capabilities may be increased by weapon developments which will permit the adaptation of nuclear warheads to many delivery systems.

Jet Bombers

32. It was previously estimated that the USSR would produce: (a) a jet medium bomber having a speed of about 500 knots and a radius/range of about 1,500/2,900 nautical miles, and (b) a jet heavy bomber having a speed of about 450 knots and a radius/range of about 2,500/4,800 nautical miles. At the Moscow Air Show on May Day, 1954, there were observed in flight nine twin-engine jet bombers, designated for intelligence purposes Type-39, and one four-engine swept-wing jet bomber, designated Type-37. On the basis of preliminary analysis⁴ of the photographs and observed characteristics of these aircraft we believe that their performance does not exceed, and may fall below, that previously estimated respectively for the jet medium and jet heavy bombers. It is estimated that both aircraft are powered by engines of 15,000-pound thrust.

33. Whether or not the Type-39 now has the performance characteristics of a jet medium bomber set forth above, we believe that the USSR will have about 20 Type-39 bombers in operational units by mid-1954, about 120 by mid-1955, and about 600 by mid-1959. This alters previous estimates to advance by one year the appearance of jet medium bombers in the Soviet Air Force. Whether or not the

⁴ Analysis of presently available evidence on these aircraft is still in progress.

Type-37 now has the performance characteristics we have estimated for a jet heavy bomber, our estimate as to the development and introduction of such a bomber remains unchanged, that is, a few in operational units by mid-1957 and about 100 by mid-1959. These dates result from a process of calculation which we believe to be basically sound but which in some instances has failed to keep up with Soviet progress. Consequently, substantial numbers of jet heavy bombers may appear in operational units prior to mid-1959 and possibly by mid-1957.

Guided Missiles⁵

34. We have many indications that the USSR is devoting great effort to its program of development of guided missiles. From an assessment of over-all Soviet technical capability, and assuming reasonable progress in Soviet programs based on the World War II Germany effort, we believe that the USSR could within the period of this estimate have considerable numbers of guided missiles in operational use. The type and characteristics of the missiles produced would depend upon the Soviet assessment of military requirements and upon the allocation of priority among the many possible types to be developed.

35. We have no firm evidence that the USSR has any guided missiles ready for operational use at the present time. The most reliable information concerning the Soviet guided missiles program relates to development and improvement of German V-1 and V-2 models acquired at the end of World War II. Based on this information we believe it likely that the USSR will have by 1956 a V-2 type of guided missile with a range of 450-500 nautical miles⁶ carrying a warhead of 2,200 pounds.

⁵ Detailed studies of this subject are currently in progress and will provide the basis of NIE 11-6-54, "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Programs in the Field of Guided Missiles," scheduled for production in the third quarter of 1954.

⁶ The Director of Intelligence, USAF, believes that the range of this missile would be on the order of 300-350 nautical miles; however, he believes it is likely that the Soviets will have, by this date, other missiles with ranges on the order of 850 to 900 nautical miles carrying a 3,000 pound warhead.

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Development of such a missile is well within Soviet capabilities. It is also well within Soviet capabilities to develop numerous other types of missiles within the period of this estimate, but we have at present no information as to which of these various types the USSR may be developing on a priority basis. Our estimate of probable Soviet military requirements suggests that the priority accorded the development of a surface-to-air missile would be at least as high as that given to development of a surface-to-surface missile.

36. We believe that it will not be within Soviet capability before 1959 to attack continental United States with guided missiles launched from Soviet Bloc territory. In 1959, it would be possible for the USSR to start series production of a pilotless-aircraft type of missile which could reach the US from Bloc territory; we have no evidence of such development now being under way. Even at the present time, it would be technically feasible for the USSR to attack targets within the US with missiles launched from long-range aircraft or from submarines. We have no evidence at present that the USSR has developed this capability.

Air Defense Weapons

37. At present, the USSR does not have an interception capability sufficient to prevent effective bombardment missions under poor visibility conditions. However, an all-weather fighter equipped with AI radar is probably a priority project of Soviet weapons development. It is expected that about 500 such aircraft will be in operational use by mid-1956 and about 2,000 by mid-1959. With the all-weather fighters available in greater numbers starting about mid-1958, along with improvements in early warning and GCI radar and a growing surface-to-air missile capability, it is expected that Soviet Bloc air defense capabilities will be improved substantially by 1959.

Submarines

38. The Soviet Navy is apparently concentrating on the construction of two long-range submarine types developed since World War II. These are equipped with snorkel and have

operating radii of about 4,700 and 6,700 miles respectively. By early 1954, 47 of these had joined the fleet and the building rate is estimated as 46 per year. The Soviets are known to have continued development of the Walther closed-cycle engine for submarine propulsion and this engine could be operational by mid-1955. It is also possible that, by mid-1959, nuclear propulsion for submarines will have been developed by the USSR.

X. PROBABLE MAIN LINES OF SOVIET POLICY

39. In making their estimate of the world strategic situation Soviet leaders probably calculate that: (a) the US is irreconcilably hostile to the Soviet system and is intent on the formation of a world-wide anti-Communist coalition; (b) the US will meet increasing problems in attempting to create and give military substance to such a coalition; (c) frustration of this effort might lead the US either to adopt a policy of isolation or to undertake preventive war; (d) fears of nuclear warfare, particularly as Soviet delivery capabilities grow, will increase pressure in the West for avoidance of war with the USSR; (e) the continuing conflict with the US can be restricted to areas and issues involving less than an all-out military effort, in which case the USSR will eventually triumph.

40. The Kremlin probably considers that there is at present a rough strategic equilibrium between the Soviet Bloc and the US-NATO coalition. On the one hand, Western strength in air and ground forces has grown, over-all Western naval superiority has been maintained, and the US has retained its superior nuclear capabilities while improving its defensive posture. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, while retaining its strength in ground forces, has reduced the margin of Western naval superiority, and has built an air force capable of using nuclear weapons in attacks on US allies, US forward air bases, and even — under comparatively difficult operational circumstances — in attacks on the continental US. Soviet leaders probably believe that they cannot be certain of winning a war, but they show no indication of feeling that the

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balance of world power is developing unfavorably to their basic interests.

41. We believe that the Kremlin probably will continue, at least for a year or two, to estimate the relative military capabilities of the Soviet Bloc and the US-NATO coalition substantially as described above. The Soviet leaders probably believe that general war would be a hazardous gamble for them, possibly involving the destruction of the Soviet system. On this basis, the Kremlin probably would conclude that the USSR should try during this period to avoid courses of action which in its judgment would clearly involve substantial risk of general war. The Kremlin will, however, probably continue to consider general war a possibility that cannot be excluded, and the USSR will almost certainly continue to build up its military and economic strength against this eventuality. We believe that the Kremlin would not be deterred by the risk of general war from taking counteraction against an action by the US or its allies which the Kremlin considered an imminent threat to Soviet security.

42. During the period of this estimate the Kremlin will try to foster and exploit weaknesses and, as opportunity offers, armed insurrections within the non-Communist nations, while encouraging political or economic conflicts among them. Soviet leaders probably believe that, by alternately easing the tension and applying political warfare pressures dexterously, they can increase the chances that in time there will arise new opportunities for Communist strategic advances without substantial risk of general war. Meanwhile, they will almost certainly continue to devote great effort to building a better balanced economic and military strength in the Soviet Union and the Satellites.

43. The Kremlin may continue to follow generally its present lines of policy throughout the period of this estimate. However, the progress being made by the USSR in the development of nuclear weapons, and the increasing Soviet capability to deliver these weapons, are changing the world power situation in important respects. As these Soviet capabil-

ities increase, the US is losing a great advantage which it has heretofore held in the struggle. Unless defensive capabilities develop beyond the degree now foreseen, both the US and the USSR within the period of this estimate probably will have sufficient nuclear capabilities to cripple each other, though only at grave risk of receiving crippling blows in return.

44. Soviet rulers will almost certainly believe that, as Soviet nuclear capabilities increase, the aversion of the US and of its allies to general war will correspondingly increase, and that the Kremlin will therefore have greater freedom of action to pursue its objectives without running substantial risk of general war. It may employ the threat of nuclear devastation as an instrument of political warfare. It may attempt to gain some of its objectives by local military actions, calculating that the US and its allies will be more anxious than before to keep such local conflicts from expanding into general war. It will be increasingly ready to apply heavy pressure on the non-Communist world upon any signs of major dissension or weakness among the US and its allies. On the other hand, we believe that the Kremlin will continue to be extremely reluctant to precipitate a contest in which the USSR would be subjected to nuclear attack. We believe that the extent to which the Kremlin uses the increased freedom of action which its increased nuclear capabilities appear to give it, and the success which it achieves, will depend primarily upon the determination, strength, and cohesiveness of the non-Communist world.

Chinese Communist Courses of Action

45. We believe the Chinese Communist leaders in general share these Soviet views about the world situation and about opportunities and methods of advancing Communist interests. During the period of this estimate, Communist China will probably be reluctant to undertake courses of action which it considers might involve substantial risk of provoking unlimited war with a major power. The major deterrents will be: (a) China needs time to consolidate the Communist state as

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well as to modernize her economy; (b) China's strong ground forces are limited in service and support units, China's expanding air force has certain limitations, and China's navy has extremely limited capabilities, and China will remain militarily dependent upon the USSR for logistical, air, and naval support; (c) China's industrial centers will be vulnerable; and (d) the margin of available resources over minimum domestic requirements will be narrow. However, China will probably counter with military force, to the full extent of its capability, any action which it considers to be a military threat to its borders or to constitute an imminent threat to its vital interests, accepting the risks of war inherent in such action.⁷

46. Both Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders probably feel that Southeast Asia offers the most favorable opportunities for Communist expansion, not only because of the vulnerability of the states in the area, but because of the possibility of exploiting disagreements between the US and its allies. The continuation of Communist successes in Indochina or the consolidation of present Communist gains

there would in Communist China's view open up enlarged opportunities for a more aggressive policy in Southeast Asia. Chinese Communist leaders would probably expand their efforts to subvert neighboring countries by political infiltration and covert support of local insurrections, but probably not by the commitment of identifiable combat units of Chinese Communist armed forces. The aggressiveness with which such a policy would be pursued would depend upon the vigor and effectiveness of non-Communist reaction.

⁷ The Director of Intelligence, USAF, believes that paragraph 45 should read as follows:

"We believe that Chinese Communist leaders in general share these Soviet views about the world situation and about opportunities and methods of advancing Communists interests. Communist China will probably not choose knowingly any course of action likely to expose its fundamental national strengths in war with a major power. However, we believe that Communist China's strength for conducting various kinds of warfare are such, and the motives and judgment of its leaders are such as to make Communist China's courses of action dangerously unpredictable under outside pressure of any appreciable magnitude."

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APPENDIX

TABLES OF MILITARY STRENGTH

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ESTIMATED STRENGTH AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BLOC
GROUND FORCES MID-1954 AND MID-1956/MID-1959

COUNTRY	Divisions by Type, Mid-1954					Total Line Divisions	
	RIFLE	MECH.	TANK	SUPPORT	OTHER	MID-1954	MID-1956-1959
USSR	110 ¹	40	25	45 ²	..	175	175
Occupied Europe	5	16	9	13	..	30	30
West, USSR	41	9	8	..	26	84	84
Caucasus	9	2	0	..	6	17	17
Central USSR	9	1	0	..	4	14	14
Far East	16	6	2	..	6	30	30
Satellites (total)	63 ³	13	6	..	..	82	93
Albania	3	..	..	..	..	3	3
Bulgaria	12 ⁴	..	2	..	..	14	16
Czechoslovakia	8	4	2	..	..	14	14
East Germany	4	3	..	..	..	7	12
Hungary	12 ⁴	1	1	..	..	14	14
Poland	12	5	..	..	..	17	19
Rumania	12 ⁵	..	1	..	..	13	15
Communist China	160	0	5	22	..	165	139
North Korea	19	0	0	0	..	19	24
Viet Minh	6	0	0	1	..	6	?

¹ This includes 5 cavalry divisions.

² Includes 20 artillery and 25 AAA divisions.

³ Includes 2 cavalry divisions and 2 mountain divisions.

⁴ Includes 1 cavalry division.

⁵ Includes 2 mountain divisions.

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ESTIMATED BLOC AIR STRENGTH IN OPERATIONAL UNITS, MID-1954/MID-1959¹

	MID-1954			MID-1955	MID-1956			MID-1957	MID-1958	MID-1959		
	USSR	EE SAT	CCAF/ NKAF	USSR	USSR	EE SAT	CCAF/ NKAF	USSR	USSR	USSR	EE SAT	CCAF/ NKAF
Fighter: Jet (Day)	10,480	1,820	1,150	10,400	10,200	2,450	1,700	9,800	9,400	8,900	2,500 ²	2,300
(All Weather)	20	.....	.....	200	500	.....	.....	1,000	1,500	2,100	.....	.....
Piston	.....	260	400	.....	.....	.....	100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Attack: Jet	.....	.....	.....	200	900	100	40	1,600	2,100	2,300	400	100
Piston	2,500	800	240	2,300	1,600	840	360	900	400	200	600	400
Lt. Bomber: Jet	2,700	60	280	3,200	3,200	280	320	3,200	3,200	3,200	600	500
Piston	500	300	320	.....	.....	310	200	.....	.....	.....	100	.....
Med. Bomber: ³ Jet	20	.....	.....	120	250	.....	.....	400	500	600	.....	.....
Piston	1,270	.....	10	1,130	950	.....	70	650	540	400	30	100
Heavy Bomber: ³ Jet	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20	60	100	.....	.....
Turbo-Prop	10	.....	.....	100	200	.....	.....	330	300	300	.....	.....
Tankers: ⁴ Medium	150	.....	.....	300	500	.....	.....	490	600	600	.....	.....
Heavy	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	60	150	250	.....	.....
Transport: ⁵ Medium	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	.....	.....	100	200	400	.....	.....
Light	1,900	150	120	1,900	1,850	180	170	1,800	1,700	1,500	270	250
Helicopters	50	.....	.....	100	300	.....	.....	450	450	450	.....	.....
Reconnaissance: Jet	500	.....	.....	750	900	70	.....	1,000	1,070	1,070	200	.....
Piston	600	160	.....	350	200	170	.....	100	30	30	100	.....
TOTALS	20,700	3,550	2,520	21,050	21,600	4,400	2,960	21,900	22,200	22,400	4,800	3,650
JETS	13,700	1,880	1,430	15,950	16,150	2,900	2,020	17,020	17,830	18,270	3,700	2,900
BLOC TOTAL (TO & E)		26,770				28,960					30,850	
Jets		17,010				21,070					24,870	
BLOC TOTAL (ACTUAL)		21,700										
Jets		12,500										

¹ NOTE: a. Figures include Naval Air.

b. USSR figures are estimates of authorized TO & E strength, except in the categories showing introduction of new aircraft types, in which cases the build-up phase in new types represents estimated actual strength. Present actual strength is estimated to be, for the various types of aircraft, the following percentages of TO & E strength: Jet fighters—80 percent; Piston fighters—90/100 percent; Attack—95/100 percent; Jet light bombers—60 percent; Piston light bombers—95/100 percent; Piston medium bombers—82/87 percent; Transport—90/95 percent; Jet reconnaissance—60 percent; Piston reconnaissance—90/95 percent. Based on present requirement trends, it is considered that the *over-all* operational establishment will be at a figure close to full authorized strength by mid-1955. The possible effect which introduction of guided missiles might have on aircraft strength in the latter part of the period cannot presently be estimated.

c. Actual over-all strength of European Satellite Air Forces is estimated at about 65 percent of authorized strength in mid-1954, at 75 percent for mid-1956, and 85 percent for mid-1959.

d. Actual strength of the CCAF-NKAF is about 75 percent of authorized strength in mid-1954, at 85 percent for mid-1956, and 90 percent for mid-1959.

² May include approximately 300 all-weather fighters.³ Figures for medium and heavy bombers represent a tentative revision of previous estimates pending complete analysis of recently acquired information. See discussion in paragraph 33. The turbo-prop bomber

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is retained in the estimated future program at a reduced strength and build-up rate, pending development of further intelligence bearing on the status of an aircraft of this class in the Soviet long-range aviation program.

4 Tankers have not been identified in operational units nor have inflight refueling techniques. The estimate presented represents the numbers of aircraft which could be supported if tankers operations were introduced.

5 In addition to Transports, it is estimated that 300 gliders are in organized glider regiments.

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SOVIET BLOC NAVAL FORCES¹

TYPE	MID-1954	MID-1956	MID-1959
Battleships (old)	3	3	3
Monitors (old)	1	1	1
Cruisers (modern)	23	24	29
Cruisers (old)	2	4	5
Destroyers (modern)	129 ²	153 ³	183 ³
Destroyers (old)	7	7	15
Coastal Destroyers (modern)	37	65	100
Coastal Destroyers (old)	15	15	15
Submarines ⁴			
Long-Range	148 ⁵	240	378
Medium-Range	73	73	73
Coastal	142	142	142
Patrol Vessels	1,150	[(No substantial change in these figures is expected during the period of this estimate.)	
Mine Vessels	530		
Amphibious Vessels	35		
Auxiliaries	225		

¹The table gives Soviet vessels only. The European Satellite and Communist Chinese contributions to total Bloc naval strength will continue to be of minor importance and the only probable additions to their strength would be by transfers from the USSR. Present European Satellite and Chinese Communist naval strength comprises six old destroyers, seven old submarines, and about 300 minor surface vessels.

²Up to six may be Destroyer Leaders (DL).

³Up to 12 may be Destroyer Leaders (DL).

⁴These estimates do not predict the possible decommissioning of older units, although recent evidence has indicated a limited retirement of units constructed prior to World War II. The number of long-range submarines given for 1959 is based upon a continuation of the present building rate. If this rate continues and if the Soviets retire all pre-World War II units by mid-1959, the composition of the force will be as follows: 334 long-range, 16 medium, 70 coastal.

⁵About 65 of these represent the two new types developed since World War II.

NOTE: Possible Capital Ship (type unknown) may be added mid-1957.

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