

SNIE 11-11-55 (30 August 1955)

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF A SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL ARMAMENTS INSPECTION

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THE PROBLEM

To estimate: (a) whether the Soviet rulers could maintain their present degree of control over their people if they should permit international inspectors of armament facilities and installations to have free access and movement within the USSR, and whether they would believe that they could maintain such control; (b) if international inspectors are granted free access and movement within the USSR, and communication among themselves and to the exterior without any interference, to what degree such inspection would give assurance against the launching of a surprise nuclear attack by the USSR against the US; and (c) in general terms, the ability of the USSR to evade arms limitations.

SCOPE

In the absence of details regarding the terms of the assumed disarmament agreement and the nature of the inspection system, this estimate can be no more than a preliminary survey of the questions posed. It does not attempt to deal with actual Soviet intentions in the sphere of disarmament, or the probable Soviet attitude toward any particular proposals for inspection or disarmament. This estimate is limited to an examination of only a few implications of an assumed Soviet acceptance of international arms inspection.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that an international armaments inspection system would present no dangers to the Soviet system which could not be overcome by techniques of control. We believe that the Soviet leaders would probably reach the same conclusion, but that their decision to accept or reject an international inspection agreement would be based for the most part on other grounds. (Para. 9)
2. The USSR could have concealed, or might accumulate by clandestine methods, the numbers and types of nuclear weapons required for a feasible attack on the US. Therefore, international inspection of nuclear weapons and fissile materials alone could not provide assurance against the possibility of surprise attack. If extensive preparations of the means of delivery were necessary before

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launching a large-scale surprise nuclear attack on the US, they would almost certainly be recognized by the inspectors. However, the ability of inspectors to give warning would be reduced not only by a high degree of Soviet readiness at the time inspection was initiated, but also by a reduction in the preparations required for an attack resulting from developments in weapons technology, delivery means, training, or logistic procedures. (Paras. 15, 17-19)

3. The Soviet leaders might evade a disarmament or inspection agreement

through resort to legal subterfuge, administrative obstructionism, use of facilities in countries not subject to inspection, and other forms of deception. In the absence of detailed information about the proposed arms limitations and inspection provisions it is impossible to foresee all the stratagems the Soviet leaders might be able to employ. Past experience indicates, however, that they are capable of great ingenuity in escaping the spirit and letter of agreements they have ostensibly accepted. (Paras. 22, 25)

DISCUSSION

I. EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION UPON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SOVIET REGIME

4. Any international armaments inspection system acceptable to the US would require the USSR to make major changes in its internal security practices, and would constitute a marked modification of the fundamental Soviet policy of secrecy. There would have to be substantial numbers of inspectors, free to travel about the country as necessary within the agreed scope of their duties, to conduct physical inspections of plants and military installations, to communicate abroad without interference, and probably to audit certain records of government ministries and production enterprises. They would presumably not have the right to information other than that related to armaments, but in view of the high degree of integration and great complexity of modern industry their operations would almost certainly impinge upon a large part of industrial activity. They would inevitably gain much information beyond the strict scope of their mission. In short, the inspectors would constitute a considerable body of foreign personnel, exempt in many important respects from the control of the Soviet state. Their freedom would be much greater than

that presently accorded the diplomatic corps in the USSR and would be without precedent in any sovereign country.

5. The impact of such a system upon the population and official personnel of the USSR would probably not be as direct and constant as these broad rights of movement and inspection suggest. It can be assumed that Soviet authorities would provide some sort of escort and surveillance on almost all occasions when actual physical inspection was undertaken, and citizens could probably be insulated from direct contact with the inspection agents to the extent that the Soviet government deemed necessary. While the presence of inspection teams within the country would be evident to the population, inspectors would probably not have occasion or opportunity to establish personal relationships with ordinary citizens, and might not even be able to converse with officials except in the presence of "liaison" officers.

6. The knowledge that an international inspection system was in operation, and the intricacies of its functioning would, of course, have an impact upon the population. In the case of the USSR, this would have psychological implications bearing directly upon interpretations of the outside world which the

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