

23 January 1954

The Honorable Val Peterson
Administrator
Federal Civil Defense Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Governor:

I return herewith the corrected transcript of my informal remarks at the recent White House Conference of Mayors, which you sent me with your letter of 28 December last.

It is the general policy in CIA not to give out publicly any of our intelligence appraisals. Normally these are limited in distribution to the policy makers to whom we report.

As a possible alternative if you feel it is important to have a statement covering the general subject matter of my remarks, I would endeavor to prepare a resume, eliminating classified matter, which you might give out as coming from the F.C.D.A.

Faithfully yours,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Enclosure

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MR. DULLES: I have asked Gov. Peterson's permission to reverse him on one point. I welcome questions. If I can't or shouldn't answer them, I will let you know very frankly. While I only have 20 minutes to address you, I will try to cut off at least three or four of the minutes at the end so if there are any questions you can put them to me. I may be seeing some of you this afternoon at the White House, and we can get together there possibly if there are any more.

The job of the Central Intelligence Agency is to try to ferret out facts and present those facts to the policymakers of Government. It is not our job to say what should be done with the facts. It is merely our job--and that is a hard enough one--to try to find out what the facts are.

When you are dealing with Russia, sometimes the best you can do is to come up with an educated guess, based on inadequate facts, and an estimate of what they have done in the past.

In that connection--and this is more from the point of view of your particular functions as Mayors of our great cities--the Soviets are able to learn a great deal more about us than we are about them. We publish the essential facts of our situation to the world. We tell the world where our installations are, where we are making this and that. We give them a great deal of information. In fact, I think we give them probably too much, but it is a very difficult problem. When you have to decide between the maintenance of our freedoms, our freedom of the press and our other freedoms, and possibly disclosing more information than an intelligence officer would like to see disclosed, I can quite understand that maybe our freedoms are much more important. If we start to abridge them in any respect, it is hard to tell where we will end.

To turn briefly to the position of the Soviet Union as we see it. When Stalin died, early last spring, a change came about in the Soviet Union; but that change, in our opinion, has not affected its basic foreign policy. The change was largely internal. We had not realized--and not until Stalin's death did we realize--the extent to which that old dictator had really taken hold of the country and of all the people there and forced it into a pattern that was not a pattern that the other leaders of the Kremlin liked. When Stalin was buried, he was really buried; and one of the extraordinary things is the extent to which his successors have buried his memory. There has been very little mention of Stalin. The Lenin line has been disinterred and brought out again; the Stalin line has been pretty well interred.

Stalin had frozen the Soviet internal policy into a rigid framework--and the framework is still rigid enough. He had set so rigid a framework that the people themselves were beginning to feel impatient. He had frozen their foreign policies into a rigidity that even men like Molotov did not like. They blamed Stalin for the break with Yugoslavia. They probably blamed Stalin pretty largely for the war in Korea and for many other rigid actions in foreign policy. So when he disappeared, they decided to change certain features of their system. That does not mean, as I said before, that they have relaxed to any great extent. They have, however, in agriculture taken a new look at the situation. They have clamped certain restrictions on the internal police. Beria's dismissal and execution is undoubtedly due to the fact that they wanted to curb the secret police. They more or less put a sign up: Don't walk on the

grass, but if you walk on the path, we won't worry you so much. In the other days, you never could tell—you might be walking on the path and still you find yourself in jail.

They also found apparently that they weren't giving their people enough from the point of view of consumer's goods, and they are making a real effort now to give them more. One of the interesting things that we have to watch is as to what extent, if at all, that will force them to cut down on their production of munitions and war material. So far we have seen very little sign of any reduction. They have been using recently quite a little of their gold to buy consumer's goods in the foreign market. You may have seen in the papers reports of sale of Soviet gold. That is going on; the gold sales of the last three or four months have gone up quite spectacularly, largely, we think, so that Russia can buy consumer's goods in the market.

We believe that the military now exercise greater authority in the Soviet Union than they did before Stalin's death. It is hard to prove that, but the execution of Beria, who was the artisan of putting in political commissars in the Army, is one of the reasons for our belief in that respect.

We see no signs, however, of a change in their foreign policy as far as objectives are concerned. They are more flexible. Fraternization is on. The Russians are perfectly willing now to mix—where they never would before—with the foreigner. They are trying to give outwardly a more flexible, a more amenable air; but when it comes to the hard question as to whether they will make any concessions, either in regard to Europe

or as regards a treaty in Korea, we find no change whatever in the fundamental attitude of their negotiators. The result is that we see no reason to relax as far as we are concerned. The policy in fact is more astute and a good deal cleverer because the present policy of the Soviet plays into the neutralist tendencies of many countries of the world, particularly countries like India, countries in Southeast Asia, and to certain people even on the Continent of Europe especially in France and in Italy.

Regarding Soviet intentions, it is our view that the Soviet does not now desire to provoke a hot war. They could stumble into one. They might feel they were crowded into one, but we do not feel, looking over the next couple of years, that the Soviets desire deliberately to provoke, or by surprise attack to initiate, a hot war within that period. It is hazardous to predict for a longer period. They are doing well in the cold war. They have prospects for further successes in the Far East particularly in Indochina.

They are also building up their atomic stockpile to formidable size, and they are constantly improving their long-range bomber fleet—and I will speak of that a little later.

The Soviet has such inherent military strength that it wouldn't be safe for us to let our guards down. They have a great advantage, of course, in having a central position from which they can strike out in various directions, protected by their great land mass, the Soviet Union, including Siberia, and then flanked by their satellites. One of the reasons for their keeping a tight hold on the satellites is to protect the Soviet heartland. That makes them, as history has shown, in the long run relatively invulnerable to land attack, and presumably therefore only

vulnerable to air attack. They have a very large standing Army. Probably the Soviet Army, plus their security troops—I should say military forces—Army, Navy, and Air Force—would be around 4.5 million. There is an additional 4 million in China and about half a million in the satellites, making a military force—Army, Navy, Air Force, and security forces—of around 9 million in the Soviet orbit.

To turn to a point even more interesting from your angle—their Air Force: Total numbers are probably very misleading. They have a long-range bomber force based on the B-29 that they obtained from us during the war, probably somewhat improved. We would estimate that they have between 1,000 and 1,500 of these medium bombers, called the TU-4. Their total range stripped down would be 4,000 to 4,500 miles probably. That would mean that these bombers are capable on a one-way mission of reaching almost any important point in the United States. Those of you who live in the tip of Florida, southern part of Texas, probably have a little more immunity than those living in the other parts of the country. But, by and large, assuming they did not care whether the planes got back or not, they could reach any part of the United States—practically any part of the United States. They have not yet got significant numbers of heavy bombers which could get to the United States and get back to their base. Of course, with refueling—and we must assume that they have the power to refuel—they could reach a good part of the United States and presumably get back. They could not reach all of the United States; and refueling in a long-range mission of this kind—particularly two-way refueling—presents serious difficulties. One refueling presents not many difficulties, assuming they have the techniques that we have.

We have felt that in the scientific and technical field, it is not safe for us to assume that we can do things they can't do. There is nothing wrong with the Russian brain. When they put their mind to it, with the help they have received from the scientists they have acquired from other countries and stolen from other countries, particularly Germany, they have the technical ability in any particular field. Where it comes to aircraft, engines for MIG aircraft, radar, and what they have done in the thermonuclear field, they have in many respects surprised us by the speed and skill with which they have reached results that we had hoped they would not reach. So in general we assume—and must assume to be safe—certainly in the Central Intelligence Agency—that they can do what we can do.

Where it comes to mass production, where it comes to the technical skills—right down the line—where it comes to doing what we do in our automobile and our other factories—no, I don't think they can do it, because by and large, taking the Soviet citizen from top to bottom, the level of intelligence of the American and of many of the Europeans is higher. The educational standards in the Soviet Union are increasing, and if you can give them a long time, they may reach the proficiency that we have now reached. I think our great superiority lies in the character and ability of the American citizen from top to bottom, and we should not count very largely on a great technical superiority merely in the scientific field.

That was a little aside as I was dealing with the aircraft situation, but I tried to make clear on the bomber situation, one-way mission, they can reach practically any target in the United States. Now, as to whether

they can get through our defense, you will hear about that from Gov. Peterson and others, because my problem is looking at the Soviet Union and not looking so much at what we can do in the way of a counterattack. Whether they would risk their planes on suicide missions of this kind, whether they would not prefer to wait, if they are going to attack, until they have the long-range bomber that we now believe they are starting in production and may have in a couple of years--that is a question that I cannot answer today. But we are inclined to think that certain of the reasons which would lead them not to attack at the moment would be the fact that they do not have long-range bomber capacity that they could come to the United States and go back and also, as I will come to later, they certainly presumably would desire to increase their stockpile of atomic weapons before they made the attack, if they had the choice, unless they felt they were forced to a situation where they had to attack.

We know they have the MIG-15, an excellent plane for defense. They have that in mass production, and they have quite a lot of them. They have a good light bomber, jet bomber, the TU-4 that I mentioned before is a prop bomber (propeller). The IL-28 is only available for shorter missions. The force of the Navy lies chiefly in their large submarine force, and a certain number of good cruisers. They have no aircraft carrier at the moment, and they only have a few obsolete battleships. They have developed their submarines and they have developed their cruisers, both light and heavy.

On the atomic side, the President the other day in his speech at the UN gave you the essential facts, and I won't repeat what he said there. They have had some tests. They have produced atomic bombs. We believe they have a substantial stockpile of atomic bombs of various types.

They have produced at least a prototype bomb with thermonuclear reactions, indicating the possibility that they have or will shortly have weapons with a very high amount of explosive power.

We have some ideas about their stockpile. Naturally, we keep those ideas secret, just as we keep our own stockpile secret. But, if they were forced into a situation where they felt it was necessary or desirable to attack the United States, and if they could get their bombers through, it would be unsafe to assume that they could not put on us a substantial load of atomic bombs. I don't think they have the kind of stockpile they would like to have to make that sort of attack, but it would not be safe for us to assume that they do not have very serious potentialities immediately in that field.

I noticed some questions that were submitted by several of the Mayors from California, in which they also raised the question of bacteriological warfare. Our general view on that is this: Where you have a choice of weapons, you choose the weapon that you think is most destructive. We believe that at the present time if they had a choice of carrying an atomic weapon or a bacteriological or gas warfare weapon, they would choose the first—that is, the atomic. We should not, however, let our guards down as to the possible developments both in the bacteriological and in the field of chemical warfare.

To back their defensive system, the Soviets are developing economic strength. Their gross national production has been increasing very rapidly over recent years at the rate of about 7 or 8 percent per annum over the last four years. That will probably level off. On the military side they devote to military purposes much larger proportions of their industrial production than we do. They don't go in so much for refrigerators,

automobiles, and so forth. They go in for planes and tanks instead. I have one or two examples here. Take electronics: We believe about 90 percent of their work in electronics goes into the military side, whereas with us it is only about 37 percent—and that is rather typical.

I mentioned that in the agricultural field they were having certain difficulties, and they have had to admit that in certain sectors of their agriculture they have made really no progress as far as production is concerned from the days before World War I.

I said at the beginning that we thought it was unlikely that they would deliberately choose war at this time. One of the reasons for reaching that conclusion is that they are quite successful with certain techniques that they are carrying on now—the policy of divide and penetrate. With their phony peace offensive they are trying to divide us. In their propaganda campaigns they have been extremely effective. They have their apparati abroad and their communist parties in various countries, particularly in Europe, in France, and in Italy. We know of the influence they have in various parts of Southeast Asia. They have other possibilities for maneuvering, particularly in the Far East. The result is that since they have not yet the capacity they would desire either from the point of view of atomic weapons or aircraft, and because they have still a good deal of maneuverability in the foreign field, in their policy we are inclined to think they would choose the latter—that is, to continue the cold war, rather than to indulge immediately in a hot war.

There is no reason for either panic or complacency. While we cannot guarantee to you time, we believe that there will be time for planning. But that time should be used. We have to keep in mind that the Soviet

has the present capacity to inflict very serious damage, but probably not with the intention of immediately using it. Consequently, we have a duty to be on the alert from now on, particularly in view of the unresolved wars in Korea and Indochina which might create at any time political impasses which in the Soviet's view might force them to change their policy. Unless the issues that face us are solved or eased over the coming years, I am afraid we have to look forward to the possibility that our dangers will increase over the next three to five years as their potentiality both from the point of view of long-range aircraft and atomic bombs increases. But that is a potentiality we should face with calm planning rather than with panic.