

REASONS FOR THE IMPACT OF SOVIET ORBIT'S MILITARY,
ECONOMIC, CULTURAL DRIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
SOUTH, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Following a recent briefing of the NSC on Communist offers of aid to the countries of the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, the question was asked: "Why do the Communists programs appear to have such an impact in these areas while our own substantially larger programs over the past five years or more have failed to win the area over to our side?"

Here are some answers to this question:--

1. First, "colonialism". They believe that the U.S. is tied in with the colonial powers in the West through NATO, in the East through SEATO.

They also see a concerting of action in the U.S. and U.K. in the Near East.

Hence they fall for the claim made by the Communists that our aid programs are a form of economic imperialism or colonialism.

2. These former colonial countries suffer from an inferiority complex in dealing with the West. This causes them to react in the classic way of self-assertion and opposition. Also unfortunately over many decades Westerners have too often acted in a tactless and overbearing manner. They don't forget the Kipling concept of "lesser breeds."

They
can join on terms of equality.

3. The Communists are very astute in their approach. They have created the impression that they do not look upon these people as "backward" or "undeveloped", phrases we have too often used. The struggle between the Soviets and U.S. and Western Europe, together with the racial and geographic background of the Soviets, have made it possible for the Soviets to get themselves accepted as non-Europeans, as fellow Asians. *They seem totally*

to overlook

Soviet colonialism in the European satellites and ruthless oppression and *even*

4

liquidation of minorities in the USSR. ~~Furthermore~~, the Soviets have been

most flexible in their negotiations. They have required no obvious quid pro quo in terms of political alignments and MDAP type agreements; they have no Battle Act problems.

5. The trade factor is of great importance. The U.S. has little interest in acquiring the surplus products of these countries -- cotton, rice and rubber -- for which Egypt, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and even Thailand require a market. The Soviet Bloc on the other hand will take these commodities in exchange for arms and other aid. They offer low interest rates and easy terms of payment. They accept large quantities of local currency which will be a most convenient war chest for their subversive

b. The countries of this area believe that the West, particularly the European countries, want to discourage their industrialization, hoping to keep them as good customers of the West in industrial products. *This, in fact, is the pattern of the past.*

f. These countries now see our aid tapering off and hear our public discussions regarding the termination of aid, discussions which are often phrased in terms offensive to them. Also the neutralist countries see the bulk of U.S. aid going to individuals and regimes which they do not like, e.g., Rhee, Chiang, Diem, Japan and Israel.

g. Our pattern of alliances, the Baghdad Pact and SEATO are resented by countries not included even though their non-inclusion is ^{generally} a matter of their own choice.

h. When the Soviets took a definitely pro-Arab and anti-Israel stand, this gave them a new basis of appeal to the Moslem countries. Our position appears ambiguous or even hostile in the Arab world. Our support of Pakistan alienates India and Afghanistan.

19. Perhaps more important than any of the above factors is the attitude of these countries toward the achievement of their economic revolution. Many of them thought that when colonial status, or protected status, ceased, their economic advance would progress rapidly. It did not and we have tended to remind them that progress is slow and requires the laying of sound foundations and the undertaking of long term projects.

Then they look at the Soviet Union + are
[The countries in this area have been] profoundly impressed by
These
developments [in the Soviet Union]. Thirty years or more ago the USSR was almost as backward industrially as they now are. In this relatively short space of time, the Soviets have achieved a position which in the eyes of many of these countries is that of the second military, industrial and prestige power in the world and a leader in science and technology.

The Soviets claim this transformation is the result of the Communist system and through subtle and persistent propaganda, the Soviets have tended to make many people in these countries believe that such is true and that possibly, by cooperating with the Communist Bloc, they too can somehow achieve a measure of growth similar to that which they see in the Soviet Union. Communist China is following the same course as the USSR

and many of these people believe that, within a limited space of time, Communist China will achieve a somewhat comparable goal. This Communist appeal plays on and feeds the desires of the undeveloped countries to achieve a rapid advance in economic development and to attain the prestige and position which appear to go with such development.

10. Finally, many of these countries believe that they can now have the best of both the free and the Communist worlds, *play both sides of the street +* ~~and~~ play one off against the other, *They are coming to feel* ~~and that very likely the fact~~ that they are the beneficiaries of Soviet aid *This* will make the U.S. even more anxious to give them counter-balancing or even greater aid. *Also those countries which have* ~~Having in general~~ adopted a neutralist role, ~~they~~ feel that they can best continue to maintain this if they accept both U.S. and USSR aid.