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USIB-D-16.2/20
19 August 1959

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

Validity Study of NIE 11-6-56

Capabilities and Trends of Soviet Science and Technology

Published 9 October 1956

The attached validity study of NIE 11-6-56 was noted by the Intelligence Board on 18 August 1959 (USIB-M-53, item 5b).



Executive Secretary

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Attachment

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1. We believe that the main judgments of this estimate, insofar as subsequent evidence has appeared, have proved to be valid. This applies particularly to judgments about the importance attached to science and technology in Soviet policy, financial support, increase in scientific and technical manpower, and Soviet progress in the fundamental sciences. Our estimates of Soviet military research and development also proved generally sound, notably with regard to earth satellites, missiles, ground weapons, and electronics. However, Soviet aeronautical research and development capabilities now appear to have been overestimated.

2. On the subject of organization, planning, and control of Soviet science, while the estimate did note the emphasis on the need for "closer relationships between scientific research and industrial application," it did not predict the major reorganization of Soviet research which accompanied the economic reorganization of 1957. Similarly, in the discussion of Soviet educational institutions, there was no forecast of the educational reforms proposed by Khrushchev in September 1958. It should be remarked, however, that these are specific developments of a kind which intelligence does not expect to predict, and failure to do so in no way affected the validity of the main estimates in this paper.

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