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SOME SURVEY INDICATIONS OF U.S. VERSUS SOVIET  
MILITARY STANDING IN THE SPACE ERA

December, 1959

The present note was drafted in response to a  
specific request, but is thought to be of sufficient  
general interest to warrant wider distribution.

SURVEY RESEARCH STUDIES  
Special Memorandum

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Available trend measurements from Western Europe on a question bearing upon U.S. versus Soviet military strength in the atomic area suggest that the Sputnik launchings had a major impact in lowering U.S. military prestige vis-a-vis Soviet Russia.

"Do you think that the Western powers are stronger in atomic weapons than the U.S.S.R., weaker, or about equal?"

	Great Britain		West Germany		France		Italy	
	June '55 (800)	Nov. '57 (877)	June '55 (657)	Nov. '57 (613)	June '55 (800)	Nov. '57 (802)	June '55 (826)	Nov. '57 (807)
West stronger	39%	26%	39%	31%	20%	14%	30%	28%
West weaker	5	21	6	10	6	20	7	12
About equal	27	31	36	40	35	28	34	39
No opinion	<u>29</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>21</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net "West stronger"	34	5	33	21	14	-6	23	16

Immediate post-Sputnik judgments on America's standing vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R. in total military strength were even lower on the average in the West European nations sampled, with an especially adverse pattern in Great Britain.

"All things considered, do you think the U.S. or Russia is ahead in total military strength at the present time? Considerably ahead or only a little?"

	Great Britain		West Germany		France		Italy	
	Nov. '57 (800)	Oct. '58 (611)	Nov. '57 (613)	Oct. '58 (1799)	Nov. '57 (802)	Oct. '58 (624)	Nov. '57 (807)	Oct. '58 (636)
U.S. considerably ahead of Russia	4%	7%	16%	9%	6%	3%	17%	13%
U.S. a little ahead	15	19	22	15	11	16	17	25
Russia a little ahead of U.S.	31	22	17	16	13	21	13	14
Russia considerably ahead	19	19	6	7	12	8	9	9
Both equal (Vol.)	6	8	20	22	20	34	23	22
No opinion	<u>29</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net U.S. ahead	-31	-15	15	1	-8	-10	12	15

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The recovery over 1955 of some of the scientific prestige the U.S. lost to the U.S.S.R. with the Sputniks was not accompanied by any general improvement in judgments as to which side is militarily stronger. Only in Great Britain, it will be noted in the trend comparisons above, was there a gain which, however, fell appreciably short of taking British opinion out of the minus column. Moreover, improvement in Great Britain was offset by an equal decline in West Germany.

\* \* \*

"Adding a few scattered worldwide returns to the West European picture on U.S. versus Soviet military might yield a picture of a virtual standoff, on the average, with the U.S. at best only slightly in the van. When it is appreciated that the countries surveyed in the present connection are almost without exception our allies, it must be presumed that a more representative picture would be even less favorable.

"All things considered, do you think the U.S. or Russia is ahead in total military strength at the present time? Considerably ahead or only a little?"

<u>Country</u>	<u>Type of Survey</u>	<u>Date of Survey</u>	<u>Net Favorable to U.S.</u>
Viet-Nam	(College Students)	March, 1959	32
Greece	(General Population)	November, 1958	20
Italy	(General Population)	October, 1958	15
China	(General Population)	December, 1958	14
Uruguay	(General Population)	June, 1958	4
West Germany	(General Population)	October, 1958	1
Japan	(General Population)	December, 1958	-1
Turkey	(College Students)	June, 1958	-2
France	(General Population)	December, 1958	-10
Great Britain	(General Population)	December, 1958	-15
AVERAGE NET FAVORABLE			5.8

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> See Special Memorandum, dated December, 1959, "Brief Summary of Some Survey Indications Bearing Upon U.S. Vs. Soviet Scientific Prestige," Confidential.

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The results of a recently completed survey in Italy -- the freshest data available in the present connection -- raise the possibility of a favorable opinion development which if more widely verified would be of no little significance. Despite the sharp drop in U.S. scientific prestige in Italy over the past year (documented in the preceding memorandum), it appears from the trend comparisons below that there has been no corresponding decline in favorable judgments about U.S. military strength.

"All things considered, do you think the U.S. or Russia is ahead in total military strength at the present time? Considerably ahead or only a little?"

No. of cases	Italy		
	Nov. '57 (307)	Oct. '58 (635)	Nov. '59 (691)
U.S. considerably ahead of Russia	17%	13%	16%
U.S. a little ahead	17	25	17
Russia a little ahead of U.S.	13	14	11
Russia considerably ahead	9	9	7
Both equal (Val.)	23	22	24
No opinion	21	17	25
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Net U.S. ahead	12	15	15

That military evaluations of the U.S. have remained stable despite sharply declining U.S. prestige in the scientific area could mean that Soviet space successes are not, at least to the same degree as formerly, being automatically translated into military power. The Russians themselves may have contributed to such a development by their stress upon peaceful rather than military implications of their recent scientific developments.

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