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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Conventional Net Assessment

FROM:

Brig Gen Frank B. Horton III, USAF
 Chairman, NIC

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

7 November 1986

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TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #05114-86
6 November 1986



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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Brig Gen Frank B. Horton III, USAF
Chairman

SUBJECT: Paper

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1. Attached is the paper I mentioned--written in May but still relevant to the ongoing post-Reykjavik analysis. on loan to us from SOVA, as the manager of the team putting together NIE 11-3/8-87. is quite high on him--and the more I see of him and his work, the more I am impressed. One might not always agree with his analyses, but what I have seen thus far is well-researched, well-thought-out, and well-written.

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2. The post-Reykjavik relevance of this particular piece is its projection of Soviet doctrinal options, and its arguments in particular for a middle ground in which arms control could create a context for maintaining Soviet nuclear power while reducing the risk of nuclear escalation and enhancing the utility of conventional forces, especially if modernized and in accord with the Ogarkov initiatives. thesis could be extended and elaborated along the following lines apropos post-Reykjavik. The Soviets, good chess players that they are, in an overly simplistic way could be argued to have come to Reykjavik with a two-track approach in mind, and were and still are prepared to pursue either of these tracks as unfolding events and their interests dictate.

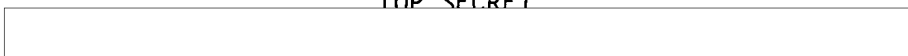
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3. Track I would be generally along the lines suggested by in his recent paper forwarded to you.

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- o The US, as expected, isn't prepared to give up SDI, and the Soviets, while refusing to agree without this concession, appear to be extraordinarily forthcoming otherwise.
- o As a result, the US generally and the SDI program particularly get the blame for failure to agree. Domestic and allied opposition to SDI is generated.



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- o Further, new life is breathed into the liberal opposition in the US, and the left opposition in Europe.
- o As a result, nuclear and conventional defense initiatives are damaged in the US and NATO. The alliance becomes more frayed, perhaps irreversibly.
- o The Soviets in the meantime retain and modernize their ballistic missile forces, a key to their superpower status.
- o Under this familiar nuclear umbrella, the Soviet continue to take risks, with the possibility of escalation, exacerbated by ballistic missiles, serving to deter U.S. responses.
- o Problem--that exacerbated possibility of escalation also tends to be self-detering for the Soviets. And in any event, SDI may ultimately reduce the utility of ballistic missiles.

4. Track II would not necessarily preferred by the Soviets, but could be an option for them. This formulation would not necessarily be a competitor but a complement to [] thesis, although [] might not see it that way.

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- o At least by the time of a new Administration, the U.S. shows willingness to slow or stop part or all of the SDI program in an arms control agreement. The Soviets get at least some credit for having brought the US around.
- o Most importantly, the SDI is in fact slowed or stopped in part of whole, a good trade for ballistic missiles if that is to be the price.
- o Why? Because while ballistic missiles are being eliminated, the Soviets may be able to build a new strategic umbrella in which they could be predominant, based on bombers, bomber and submarine carried cruise missiles, and most importantly, defenses against air breathers.
- o Also, with the elimination of strategic and tactical ballistic missiles--as well as tactical cruise missiles (unclear why the latter need be included given the NSDD's thrust), the U.S. deterrent linkage to Europe would be greatly eroded, and the US and its allies would be unlikely to bridge the gap with qualitative and quantitative improvements to conventional forces, especially if lulled by the elusive prospects of conventional arms control.
- o In the meantime, the Soviets would likely pursue their own conventional qualitative improvements along the lines of the Ogarkov proposals, to provide another layer of assured predominance, in this case at the theater level.

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- o Under this new albeit unfamiliar strategic umbrella, reinforced by its improved conventional forces, the Soviets might be better able to take risks--with at worst no increase in the likelihood of US responses, but less likelihood of escalation if the US does respond, and less damage to Soviet interests whether or not escalation occurs.
- o Problem--the known benefits of predominant ballistic missiles would be exchanged for the less certain prospects of a different and more diffuse sort of balance; plus, the US and its allies might be able after all to overcome political and economic obstacles to take advantage of their technological potential to regain predominance at the strategic and conventional levels.

5. I don't think we have done enough work yet to say for certain that the above formulation is correct, but I believe it has enough merit to be worthy of further exploration as we develop our response to the NSDD. I would hate to see us develop a strategy based on a perceived one-track Soviet game plan, if in fact there is a good possibility they may have in mind at least two, with the flexibility to pursue either as events and their interests dictate.

Very respectfully


Frank B. Horton III

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

[Redacted]
6 October 1986
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National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brig Gen Frank B. Horton, USAF
Chairman

FROM: [Redacted]
Chairman, NIE 11-3/8-87

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SUBJECT: Follow-Up to SOVA Strategy Conference (29-30 September 1986)

1. The SOVA conference, in my view, reached a prudent bottom line on the issue of where Soviet military strategy is heading. Namely, most of the invitees concluded that the evidence in hand is sufficient to indicate that we must seriously evaluate potential new directions in Soviet strategy. But they also concluded that it is premature for us at present to advance firm judgments on exactly what strategy the Soviets have endorsed or will endorse. (S NF)

2. A few months ago, in order to lay some groundwork for dealing with this issue in this year's 11-3/8, I prepared the attached draft to establish an overall frame of reference for evaluating how the Soviets might now be weighing their strategic choices. The paper focuses on drawing out the implications from a wide variety of community assessments dealing with Gorbachev's political situation, the Soviet economic scene, Soviet arms control proposals, and pertinent conventional and nuclear force developments. In particular, the paper features a matrix laying out hypothetical alternative strategies--including the kinds of forces, employment options and the like that would appear to fit an "Ogarkov-type" strategy best and those that would be more compatible with alternatives to Ogarkov's apparent approach. Given its purposes, the paper reflects all the available reporting that enables us to assess Ogarkov's likely views on these matters, but does not specifically reference or discuss the pertinent sensitive reporting. (S NF)

3. On the second day of the conference, I gave the matrix in this paper to the invitees to solicit their comments on the utility of such an approach. Howard Stoertz and General Edward Meyer, in particular, thought it was a good way to tackle the problem. I invite your comments as well. (U)

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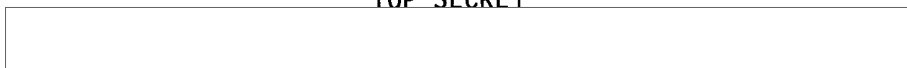
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