

24240

26502

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

22 April 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 165

SUBJECT: CIA Evaluation of the Zapotocky Remarks Concerning
Soviet Plans for East-West Conflict

REFERENCE:

The authenticity of this report is highly questionable for several reasons: first, because of the circuitous route by which it reached the US (i.e., purportedly from the Kremlin to Zapotocky,

;
; second, because the report is filled with inconsistencies; and third, because of the possibility that this report is a "plant." A number of reports similar in nature have been discredited as being plants.

The following considerations also cast doubt on the authenticity of the report:

- (a) It is possible that Zapotocky may not have made the statements credited to him in this report;
- (b) even if Zapotocky did make the statements, they may represent ideas other than those he claims to have acquired in Moscow;
- and (c) the information, purportedly from Moscow, may have been purposely colored.

Even granting that the document is authentic, it contains little that has not been available in newspapers and other overt sources, beyond the statement that the USSR desires and will be ready to instigate a conflict in 1952-53. Even this is weakened by Zapotocky's

Note: This memorandum has been concurred in by the intelligence organizations of Departments of State, Army, and Navy. The Navy would add another point to second paragraph above; namely that it is considered unlikely that authentic Kremlin strategy would have been given to a Czech official, even one as highly placed as Zapotocky.

Document No. 001

NO CHANGE in Class.

DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGED TO: TS S (C)

Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 9/11/78 By:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

admission in the report that he is unaware of Soviet military plans and by his reference to the Kremlin's ability to complete consolidation and preparation for war at an earlier date, i.e., in from 18 to 24 months from December 1948.

Elsewhere in the report the unqualified statement that "time works for the Soviet Union" would obviate the necessity of seeking armed conflict in 1952-53. Generally, the report merely reiterates familiar Soviet propaganda themes in use since the end of World War II.

The net impression left by the report is that (a) the USSR is complete master of the situation and, given twenty-four months (i.e., until December 1950) will be completely prepared for war, (b) practically all factors in the cold war operate to Soviet advantage, and (c) Western measures are costly and have little or no effect on Soviet plans or capabilities. This impression is belied by the known political and economic problems of the Soviet orbit, and the vehemence with which the USSR opposes such measures as ERP and the Atlantic Pact.

For a more detailed evaluation see Enclosure "A".

ENCLOSURE "A"

CIA Evaluation of the Zapotecky Remarks Concerning Soviet Plans
for the East-West Conflict

This report, while of considerable interest, presents a distorted analysis of the Soviet position vis-a-vis the West, emphasizing Soviet strength and ignoring Soviet weaknesses. While the data contained may have been given to Zapotecky by the Kremlin, it may have been presented with the intention of facilitating and justifying further unpalatable efforts towards consolidation of the Soviet orbit. Zapotecky, regardless of his personal convictions, may have disseminated this report within Czechoslovakia to "prove" both the invincibility of the Soviet bloc and the folly of the opposition to Soviet measures.

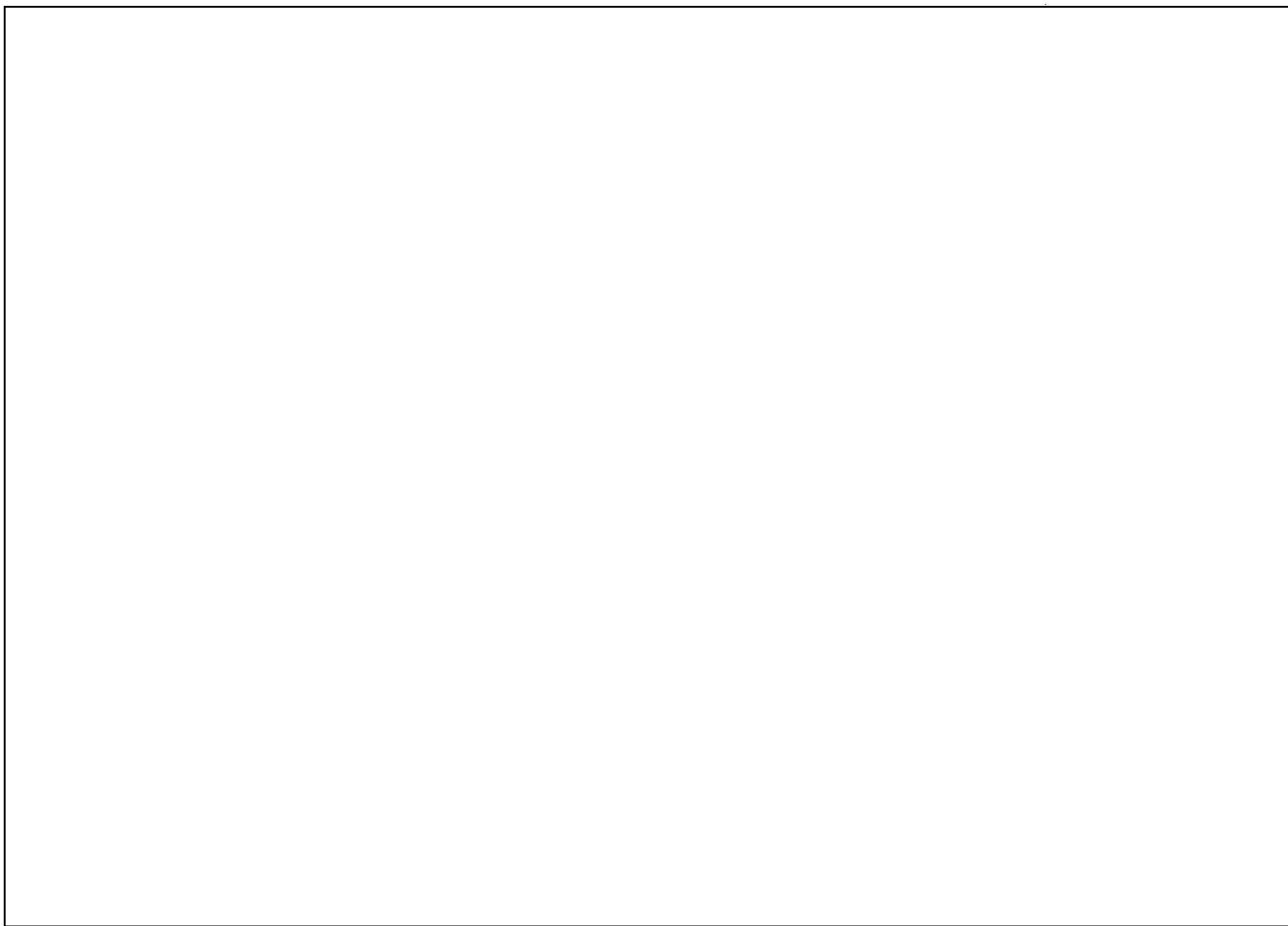
Factually, the report presents little that has not been available in newspapers and other overt sources. Generally it merely reiterates familiar Soviet propaganda themes which have been expounded since the conclusion of World War II. The broad generalizations of this report are subject to various and possibly dangerous specific interpretations.

The Zapotecky Report comes to CIA fourth hand, i.e., from Zapotecky

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] believes the report genuine, its authenticity cannot be vouched for by CIA. Since Herne is the greatest rumor factory in Europe, it is possible that this report is either a "plant" by the Kremlin, by the Czechoslovak Govern-

ment, the Czech underground, or even by Czech refugees who would like to see the United States open hostilities against the USSR in the near future.



Specific Comments follow:

Paragraph 2.

"We will receive from Moscow a credit in both currencies and in gold. Naturally, it won't be completely enough to cover our increased needs for imports, given the new tasks which were assigned to us. It will be, therefore, necessary to increase exports regardless of the domestic market. Besides that, we will use our gold reserve regardless of the Czech currency fund. In order to do so without anybody noticing it, we will publicly stress the credit in gold, but this will be only for public consumption. You can be sure that we will have enough hard currency and gold to allow us to import what the heavy and machine tool industries will need."

Comments:

The critical foreign exchange position of Czechoslovakia, reported by CIA in November 1948, has been publicly known for some time. The assignment of "new tasks" to Czechoslovakia can be implied from the text of the Czechoslovak-Soviet economic agreement, which was announced 15 December. It is logical to deduce that the suggested currency and gold manipulation will be resorted to in order to provide sufficient foreign exchange for essential imports.

Paragraph 3.

"Yes, there will be a war, but only when we want it. In Moscow they reached the conclusion that it is not enough to wait until the economic crisis by itself causes the crash of capitalism and of the bourgeoisie, but they don't think that the economic crisis is imminent. In Moscow, in their hearts they admit that Varga is right, but passive waiting is not enough and it is necessary to give the finishing blow to the West. The whole problem is that the conflict must not come at the moment when they (the West) would like it. Naturally, we have to proceed carefully. For the time

being we are neither strong nor consolidated for an open conflict, but it is only a question of 18 or 24 months. It will be, therefore, necessary to do everything in order to avoid a conflict in 1949. You know well that at present there is not full confidence, in Moscow, in us, in the Poles, not to speak of the Rumanians, and Bulgarians. I don't mean in this connection the governments but it is mainly the problem of the armies. The Russians have quite a different problem. The old generation disappeared and the young one was educated by them, but even the Russians had to and will have to make many changes in their army. We must also make decisive changes in our officers corps (Czech), and that without regard to persons and their qualifications. The same thing in industry. It will be not enough to eliminate only certain persons, but it will be necessary to eliminate whole groups. We were also informed about the unreliability of transport personnel. This will explain to you the changes in personnel that we will have to make. We can't have a conflict before 1952-53, which would be from our point of view the best moment. Agreement? Certainly yes, but only a temporary agreement. We must not be deceived by that and we have to prepare everything for the final conflict. In the next year without any doubt there will be some agreements which will be surprising for both the West and our people. In that connection you will have an especially important task. You must deal with the West, conclude new commercial treaties, even long-term commercial treaties, and you must show them (the West) prospects for good business. They are so eagerly looking for profit that they analyze everything only from the commercial standpoint."

Comments:

The statement that Moscow considers that the economic crisis of capitalism is not imminent appears less significant when the possible purpose of its transmission to Zapotocky is considered. The Kremlin may have given Zapotocky this information in order to justify the increasing economic and political sacrifices which the Soviet Union is apparently demanding from Czechoslovakia to counter the threat of a strong West. It would be difficult to justify such measures if the

Kremlin displayed a conviction that the crisis of capitalism was imminent. The reference to Soviet economist Varga appears to be Zapotocky's personal opinion based on information received from the Kremlin concerning the temporary economic stability of the West.

Consolidation, particularly in the field of economic coordination and planning, in connection with the governments as well as the armies is of utmost importance to the Kremlin in view of the growing rehabilitation and unity of the West. This is apparent in recent personnel purges within both the governments and Communist Parties of the satellite states. Such consolidation will eventually increase the potential Soviet control in the event of war, but at the same time it is necessary under present conditions simply to hold the satellites in line. Soviet efforts to consolidate the Soviet orbit are also believed to be reflected by personnel changes within the USSR itself.

Even from the Soviet viewpoint, eighteen to twenty-four months appears overly optimistic for completion of Soviet war preparations, particularly if the purges of industry and the armed forces mentioned by Zapotocky are carried out. This section of the report implies readiness for, and desirability of, open conflict in 1952-53, while later (para. 11) Zapotocky

confesses a lack of knowledge of Soviet military plans. Furthermore, the unqualified statement (para. 5) that time works for the Soviet bloc is in apparent contradiction to the desirability of war at Soviet instigation during 1952-53.

Paragraph 4.

"It is not necessary to be afraid that these agreements will undermine the morale of the proletariat of the whole world. Our final aim is the liquidation of the bourgeoisie and capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, as far as our propaganda for home consumption goes, it is not necessary to put on any brakes. We will speak the truth to the people, but it is not necessary to say the same thing when dealing with the capitalists. We have an enormous advantage in dealing with them. We have an unchangeable final aim, a unifying idea, and unified command, and therefore, also, total freedom in the choice of tactics and means. We do not need to worry about comments in the press and in the Parliament. Both are fully and reliably on the side of the government."

Comments:

This statement is typical of Soviet propaganda regarding the invincibility of the Soviet Union. While the Kremlin can probably control the effects of trade agreements on the Soviet and Satellite populations, it has in no sense a unified command and total freedom in the choice of tactics and means. The "truth to the people" obviously refers to familiar Soviet propaganda rather than actual truth.

Paragraph 5.

"Of course, a coexistence of two -- I don't mean ideologies -- but of two totally different political, economic, and social systems which exclude one another is in the present world excluded. We know them but they don't know our world, and therefore they evaluate everything according to their standards,

and that is another advantage for us. We have fought in the past already for our principles and therefore we know that we have to fight them until their final destruction. But they are trying to avoid this clash at any price, or at least postpone it even if they are aware that time works for us. They are too degenerate and accustomed to a comfortable life. Time works for us."

Comment:

Time is not necessarily working for the Soviet bloc, particularly if the West continues along the pattern of economic rehabilitation and unity of purpose as currently exemplified by ERP and the Atlantic Pact. This may not, however, be apparent to the Kremlin in view of the probability that reports reviewed by it are tailored to fit the dogmatic analysis of Western capitalism.

Paragraphs 6 and 7.

"Their cold war is, on the whole, convenient for us. It costs them a tremendous amount of money and that will lead to dissatisfaction on the part of their taxpayers, on the votes of whom their politicians are dependent. Fear of losing votes will lead in the United States to new compromises and finally to isolationism. At the same time, this cold war of itself can not achieve any victory which would be visible to their broad masses. On the contrary, the masses will not understand why this cold war is being waged when on the other hand their capitalists are doing business with us.

"This will, undoubtedly, lead to internal political complications. Yes, it is admitted that the cold war causes some difficulties to us too, but in a different way. It means only that the middle classes will have less food and clothing and that the prices of strategic materials will be increased. As you know, we import by subterfuge even what the United States doesn't allow us to import. It is only a question of price. We, even during this cold war, can and have sent our parachutists wherever we want. They need planes; we don't."

Comment:

The cold war has so far resulted in continuing progressive steps toward Western unity, a development most inimical to Soviet plans. The vehemence of the Soviet attack on ERP and the Atlantic Pact is believed to reflect the grave concern with which the Kremlin actually views these developments. While internal political complications in the West have developed and will undoubtedly develop in the future, the understanding of the cold war by the peoples of the West, particularly the U S , has already been demonstrated and will probably continue to grow. Also, the cold war is retarding industrialization of the

Soviet orbit, and creating new problems of control by reviving the hope of liberation in the population of the Satellites. This analysis, therefore, appears as wishful thinking on the Soviet side.

Paragraph 8.

"We were afraid at first of the preventive war which would have undoubtedly found us unprepared and in an unfavorable position. This also will explain to you the importance of February events. Now, after careful analysis of the situation, we are convinced that the West will not start a preventive war. The re-election of Truman was convenient to us. He is a typical representative of the degenerate business-minded West. He believes only in business and compromise, and he will do everything in order to avoid a decision which involve employing force. He fears what he sees approaching and he is satisfied if he can postpone it a bit, even if he is bound to lose by that any chance. We do not deny that the situation was critical this year (1948) and we expect a new crisis by next year in May. The important task is now to disperse the strength of the United States and Great Britain by local crises. For this purpose, and also for propaganda, the United Nations is priceless."

Comment:

Policies pursued by the U S both before and after the re-election of Mr. Truman do not support this analysis. Zapotocky's ^{purported} remarks concerning a preventive war appear more as a means to justify the Czech coup than as a true reflection of Soviet concern.

Paragraph 9.

"In one sense, our road is parallel to that of the United States. It is the liberation of the colonial nations. Of course, even here the United States have purely selfish aims. They don't have any colonies and they try to alienate

Paragraph 9 (cont'd).

them from their present holders, and they hope that they will be able to rule them and exploit them on a commercial basis. We help them because we know that they will never achieve this aim, but that they will at the same time seriously weaken their own allies. They overlook completely the historic and political evolution in colonies. The bourgeoisie phase has not even started yet. If independent states are established there will be nothing but the ruling group and the proletariat. Therefore, those states will be ready to accept our socialist political system, and the people themselves will take the government and power in their hands. This will be the most serious blow against the capitalist system because it will eliminate them from Asia and then from Africa. This is precisely the genius of the Politburo because it knows how to use even the help of the capitalists in order to achieve its aims. Don't forget that without the treaty with Hitler in August 1939, it would have been difficult for Stalin to defeat him."

Comment:

Such a favorable interpretation of the colonial problem, particularly with regard to the problems of U S policy, might conceivably have been given to Zapotocky by the Kremlin. This analysis presupposes Communist domination of practically all colonial independence movements. This supposition is perhaps best refuted by the case of Pakistan and India, which, since achieving independence, have been capable of controlling Communist minorities. In spite of the friendly attitude toward the USSR which existed in these countries prior to becoming independent, the governments have shown increasing tendencies to align themselves with the Western Powers. Since the date of this report, the recent Asian Conference in New Delhi, with numerous representatives of

Asiatic nationalism, was condemned by the USSR as an effort to establish an Asiatic anti-Soviet bloc. There is also evidence that the USSR has become seriously concerned over the implications of Point Four of President Truman's inaugural address.

Paragraph 10.

"For the time being, we have to concentrate our attention to Europe. We will make new attacks in France and in Italy during the spring. Also Holland and Belgium are on the schedule. As far as we (Czechs) are concerned, we are considered a key territory. Our task will be to produce and repair weapons. Today there is no more danger of foreign intervention. They proved to be unprepared and they don't know how to deal with our tactics. Also, the German problem will be solved in a similar way. Every compromise is a gain for us and a loss for them. They have always to cede a part of what they had before while we are always gaining completely new ground, and so we march on their ground to our goal."

Comment:

This analysis is believed over-optimistic with regard to Communist capabilities in Western Europe and Germany. As far as "gaining completely new ground" is concerned, the Soviet bloc has not gained any ground beyond the "iron curtain" in Europe since the end of the war.

Paragraph 11.

"I don't know naturally, their (Russian) military plans but judging from what tasks we were assigned and from what we were told, it is clear that our area is considered by them (Russians) as very important since its fall would mean a total change in their strategic position and would uncover Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and even Bulgaria. It would be equal to the loss of their continental position."

Comment:

purported
Zapotocky's/confession of ignorance regarding Soviet military plans reflects adversely on the authenticity of statements throughout the report concerning Soviet war intentions. Furthermore, the defensive tone of this paragraph is in contradiction to the generally offensive tenor of the entire report.

Paragraph 12.

"Berlin is not a problem for us but for the West. We could at any time make their stay in Berlin and their airlift impossible with relatively very small risk of an open conflict, but this is not necessary. They exhaust themselves financially and they use up their air material, and at the end this celebrated airlift will disappoint the Germans because it can only give basic food to the Berliners but will not prove sufficient in maintaining their industry. In the case of a conflict it will be for us a priceless first triumph since we will capture the whole western colony in Berlin including their material."

Comment:

It is not believed that the airlift could have been made impossible at any time without serious risk of open conflict. If this were true, it would probably have been done long ago, as the airlift constitutes, from the Soviet viewpoint, a dramatic and damaging example of Western, particularly US determination. The psychological impact of the airlift alone, both within Germany and the satellite orbit, is undoubtedly a matter of considerable concern to the Kremlin.

Paragraph 13.

"If they (the West) would try to make use of the Germans they would undoubtedly alienate even those who otherwise, in our country or elsewhere, would be willing to go along with them, and what is important they would unify completely the Soviet Union. Our task in propaganda will be to strengthen and help the anti-war elements in the West, and at the same time show up their compromises as a sign of their knowledge of their own weakness. Our people have to be accustomed to the idea that the West is powerless and so lose their fear of its technical superiority."

Comment:

In the event of war, successful exploitation of the fear of Germany in the Soviet orbit would probably enhance popular support of the Soviet war effort. The ability of Soviet propaganda to achieve the aims outlined in the remainder of the paragraph is highly questionable.

CIA COMMENT ON AIR FORCE STUDY NO. 221

The Air Force comments - particularly those contained in "Annex A" of the Air Study No. 221 - represent an apparent endorsement of the Report rather than an evaluation.

There is an inclination to overlook the questionable character of the source of the document as well as the fact that the subject matter contained therein represents raw information and as such should be subjected to considerable examination prior to acceptance, particularly in the light of events which have transpired since its receipt.

The Air Force takes the stand that the Report is basically true - and will continue to be so - and then sets out to support its position primarily by means of frequent references to Leninist-Stalinist doctrine. This approach is somewhat naive, since for almost any given Communist polemic one can cite chapter and verse. Further the Air Force comments are characterized (Air Study No. 221, Annex "A", p. 6, last para.) by certain unjustified generalizations such as "at the moment the balance of power in favor of the West is maintained solely by our exclusive possession of an atomic capability." Also, "It is believed that if and when the Soviets achieve even one atom bomb, the balance will immediately shift in their favor." Such statements, which completely overlook the tremendous economic and industrial edge of the West as a contributing factor to balance of power are unacceptable to CIA.

After much favorable endorsement of Soviet capabilities, the Air Force suddenly moderates its stand and concludes with a paragraph (Air Study No. 221, Annex "A", p. 9) with a portion of which CIA is in general accord since it represents in the main our version of as much consideration as the original Report warrants:

"The Zapotocky report is valuable in emphasizing the consistency of Soviet long-range thinking, and their devious course toward their fixed objective of undermining, weakening, and finally overthrowing all opposition to world-wide Communist dictatorship. It is valuable because it checks with other reliable material pointing to the same conclusions. It must be read in proper perspective, bearing in mind that the original report itself includes much that is for effect, much that is wishful thinking, and that there is no sure evidence that it might not have been a plant."

In Par. 2 of Air Force Study No. 221 the statement is made that "CIA rated the content of the report as probably true." This statement is incorrect. CIA has previously made no official evaluation of the content and while certain portions of the report are in fact probably true, CIA very definitely does not consider the over-all report worthy of such a high rating. The source rates the content as "probably true."

CIA's detailed comments on the original report are contained in IM-165.