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228
NIE 11-4-56
2 August 1956
TS #102440-u

58

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 11-4-56

(Supersedes NIE 11-3-55)

Adams
75 J sec

SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND PROBABLE COURSES
OF ACTION THROUGH 1961

Air 110 J sec

(Advance Conclusions)

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 2 August 1956. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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Authority	<i>RAC review</i>
By	<i>SLG</i>
NLE Date	<i>5/14/02</i>

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

2 August 1956

SUBJECT: NIE 11-4-56: SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND PROBABLE COURSES OF ACTION THROUGH 1961

THE PROBLEM

To examine the political, economic, scientific, and military strengths and weaknesses of the USSR and to estimate probable Soviet courses of action through 1961.

CONCLUSIONS

General

A. The changes in Soviet internal and external policies over the last three years have resulted from the effort of the regime to cope with problems ignored or aggravated by Stalin's arbitrary personal rule, and to develop tactics and methods which the

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Soviet leaders deem better suited to advancing Soviet interests in a changing world situation. It is not clear where this process of change will ultimately lead; the current Soviet leaders are probably capable of even more flexibility than they have already demonstrated. But they have shown no inclination to depart from the totalitarian character of the Soviet state or to abandon their aim of expanding the Communist sphere of power and their ultimate objective of achieving a Communist-dominated world.

B. We believe that the principal objectives of Soviet policy over the next several years are: (1) to increase the economic strength and military capabilities of the Sino-Soviet Bloc; (2) to weaken the cohesion of the non-Communist world, and particularly to disrupt NATO; (3) to cause a retraction of Western power and influence, and particularly to force withdrawal of US military power from its present deployment around the periphery of the Bloc; and (4) to expand Soviet influence throughout the world by political, economic, and subversive means.

Probable Courses of Action

C. In pursuing these objectives, the Soviet leaders probably intend to maintain for a considerable period the general posture

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of "peaceful coexistence" with the non-Communist world which they have been developing, especially since the spring of 1955. They will continue the effort to identify Bloc policies with peace, anticolonialism, social and economic progress, and to label the Western Powers, especially the US, as opponents of these causes. This effort is intended to end the isolation of the USSR and the Communist parties which resulted from Soviet postwar policy, to facilitate Communist political action in popular fronts with democratic groups, and thus to increase Soviet influence in the non-Communist world.

D. The policy of peaceful coexistence reflects the Soviet leaders' awareness of the dangers of nuclear war inherent in a policy of aggression as well as their appreciation of the political opportunities opened up by their present policy in many areas. Accordingly, we believe that the USSR will try to avoid courses of action which in its judgment would involve serious risk of general war. Nevertheless, insurrection or aggression by local Communist forces might occur if the Communists are presented with opportunities which seem to them to involve minimal risk of large-scale conflict. Such aggression might even become probable if the Communist judge the political condition of the non-Communist world to be such that local aggression would promote confusions and divisions rather than stimulate renewed vigilance and determination.

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E. The issues presented by the Chinese offshore islands and by Indochina appear at present to offer the greatest possibility of a Communist resort to armed action. On both issues the Communists might hope to justify resort to military action on grounds that would be accepted by considerable elements of world public opinion, and moreover might expect that the US would be deterred from armed intervention by the opposition of its allies and by the fear of alienating some important states of Asia. For the present, however, the USSR apparently intends to curb tensions surrounding both issues, while encouraging by diplomacy and propaganda a gradual erosion of Western resolve to oppose Communist expansion in these areas.

F. The underdeveloped countries have emerged in the last year as particular targets of the new Soviet policy. We believe that the USSR will vigorously pursue its recently expanded efforts to establish wider economic as well as political relations with these countries. Estimated Soviet industrial production would permit considerable increases in exports of capital equipment and military end items without appreciable adverse effect on internal Bloc programs, and even with some economic advantage.

G. In particular, the USSR will almost certainly persist in a vigorous effort to displace Western influence in the Middle Eastern

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and adjacent African states and to align them with the Bloc. The USSR is using the Suez controversy and the Arab-Israeli conflict to enhance its influence in the Arab world. We believe, however, that the Soviet leaders recognize that vital Western interests are so deeply involved in the area that the USSR would be courting major political and possibly military risks if it supported the Arabs in violent courses of action affecting either issue.

H. In Europe the USSR will not relax its efforts to frustrate West German rearmament and to weaken NATO ties and defense efforts. On the central problem of Germany, we believe that for at least the next several years the USSR will insist on maintaining the division of the country. For some time to come the Soviet leaders will probably consider that even neutralization would not provide sufficient assurance against a reunified Germany's tacit alliance with the West.

Internal Political Developments

I. At least for the time being, the problem of providing a /^{continuing} effective leadership in the Soviet state to replace Stalin's one-man rule has apparently been resolved. Despite the evident primacy of Khrushchev, there seems to be a collective participation in policy formulation by at least the small group in the Communist Party

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Presidium. A key feature of this "collective leadership" is the apparent denial of control over the police power to any single leader. No firm estimate can be made as to whether the present apparent stability within the top leadership will continue indefinitely or whether one or another figure will eventually emerge in something like the absolute position held by Stalin. But even if a struggle for power should occur, we believe that it would be resolved without open violence and without basically weakening the regime's control.

J. The recent repudiation of Stalin marks a new phase in the regime's attempt to convince the Soviet people, and world opinion as well, that it has departed from the evils of Stalin's rule. By providing greater security against police abuses, permitting broader contact with the non-Soviet world, and otherwise easing somewhat the conditions of life in the USSR, the regime is attempting to cultivate more favorable attitudes towards itself and its goals. It is particularly interested in soliciting initiative on the part of the professional classes and party officials in order to advance its current efforts for greater economic efficiency and productivity. However, the attempt to strike a new balance between coercion and freedom has not involved any weakening of the means of control, including the police apparatus. We believe that the regime could

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return to Stalin's harsher discipline though at the cost of some disillusionment which would hamper it in the achievement of its goals.

Soviet Military Strength and Capabilities

K. There will probably be a decrease in the personnel strength of the USSR's active military establishment. The announced reductions, which we believe would affect principally the ground forces, may reduce over-all active strength to about three million men, and possibly somewhat lower. However, the over-all effectiveness of Soviet forces for modern warfare will continue to increase, primarily due to the improved weapons becoming available in quantity, to changes in organization, and to adaptation of doctrine and tactics designed to fit Soviet forces for nuclear warfare.

L. Current and prospective military programs are likely to result in the following principal developments affecting Soviet military strength during the next five years:

- (1) The USSR's nuclear stockpile, ranging from very low-yield weapons to high-yield thermonuclear weapons, will continue to grow rapidly. The upward revision*

* See the footnote by the Director of Naval Intelligence to Paragraph 75.

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of our estimates of Soviet fissionable materials production and the Soviet test of a multimegaton weapon lead us to conclude that the USSR now has a significant multimegaton capability and will soon have a major one.

- (2) We estimate that the USSR now has about 1,300 aircraft in its long-range air force, including 35 BISON jet heavy bombers, 30 DEAR turbo-prop heavies, 475 DADGER jet mediums, and 760 BULLS. Based on a judgment as to what Soviet planners probably estimate their requirements to be, and on recent increases in the number of air regiments, we now estimate that the USSR is building toward a force of about 1,500 modern bomber-type aircraft by mid-1960. We also believe that in the light of probable Soviet optimum requirements, including those for attack on the continental US, a likely composition of this force would be about 300 jet and turbo-prop heavy bombers and 700 jet medium bombers. Many unknown factors, for example the degree of future Soviet success in the guided missile field, could lead to Soviet decisions which would alter both the size of this force and the balance between types of aircraft. Long-Range Aviation will probably acquire improved base and staging facilities and a substantial inflight refueling capability. By 1961,

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a new medium bomber with "supersonic dash" capabilities may be introduced.*

- (3) At present, the USSR could have a small number of ballistic missiles with ranges up to 900 n.m. These could carry small and medium-yield nuclear warheads, and in the period 1958-1959 could be fitted with high-yield nuclear warheads. By 1958-1959, the USSR could also have a small number of intermediate-range ballistic missiles (1,600 n.m.), and by 1960-1961, a small number of intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- (4) The USSR will considerably strengthen its air defense capability, including by 1961 a fighter force more than 50 percent equipped with all-weather types, improved electronic equipment, and improved guided missiles and warheads.
- (5) A substantial increase will probably take place in Soviet submarine strength, which is now estimated at 445 vessels, about half of which are medium and long-range craft of

* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes it unlikely that a force of this magnitude and composition would be developed. See his footnote to Paragraph 110.

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postwar design. Submarine building rates will probably continue to increase through 1957 but decrease in 1958 due in part to the impact of the nuclear-powered submarine program and the probable adaptation of present submarines to missile weapons systems. If the estimate 1958 rate were maintained through the rest of the period, this would result in a mid-1961 force of approximately 900 submarines of all types, including about 300 long and medium range boats of postwar design. However, we have no intelligence to indicate planned future Soviet submarine strength. The Soviet Navy will probably also acquire surface vessels equipped to launch guided missiles.

- (6) Soviet Army ground forces are being modernized to achieve improved firepower, mobility, and combat effectiveness for both nuclear and non-nuclear warfare. They are being supplied with a wide variety of new weapons and equipment, and will probably acquire guided missiles and tactical nuclear weapons.

M. The size and composition of the USSR's military establishment will be subject to further modification as the period

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advances and the Soviet leaders reappraise their military requirements and strategy in the light of the capabilities of the new weapons, the world balance of military forces, and the international political situation. We believe, however, that the Soviet leaders will continue to maintain formidable military power as a basis for their policy and to meet political and military contingencies. They will almost certainly not submit their military programs to the constraints of a comprehensive system of international inspection and control. Soviet capabilities for nuclear or non-nuclear warfare of large or small scale, including direct attack on the US, will increase considerably by 1961.

Developments in the Soviet Economy

N. We now estimate that the present high rate of Soviet economic growth will decline only slightly by 1961, when it will still exceed six percent per year. As a result, Soviet gross national product (GNP) in 1961 will be nearly 50 percent above its 1955 level or about 45 percent as large as the projected US GNP; in 1955 it was about 37 percent as large as the actual US GNP. Since Soviet defense expenditures, despite the new weapons programs in prospect, will probably increase less rapidly than GNP over this

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period, the relative military burden on the economy should decline slightly.*

O. Present Soviet economic policy clearly envisages continued high priority for heavy industry, and we estimate that such production will increase by 70 percent or more during the next five years. The probable reduction in military manpower will facilitate this growth by providing additions to the labor force. Agricultural production will grow more slowly, probably increasing by about one quarter; such growth would provide the basis for a continued improvement in material welfare.

P. Soviet scientific and technical capabilities continue to expand rapidly. Soviet industrial technology has demonstrated that it is able to adapt and introduce the most advanced methods of production, although the average level of Soviet practices still lags considerably behind that of the West. Moreover, the USSR almost certainly has the scientific and technological capability necessary to develop weapons and military equipment which are generally equal to those of any other nation, and in the technological race there are times when in certain fields the USSR may well be ahead of the US and times when the US will outstrip the USSR.

* The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, does not concur in the cost study upon which this conclusion is based. He does not believe that there is sufficient information available to estimate the relative military burden on the Soviet economy. See the footnote by the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army to Appendix B. See also the footnote by the Director of Naval Intelligence, attached to Appendix B.

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*IAC considered
amended and
adopted on
2 Aug 56*

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

26 June 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: NIE 11-4-56: SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND COURSES OF ACTION
(Parts I & II)

1. The attached parts of the draft estimate have been approved by the Board of National Estimates pursuant to a consideration of it by the IAC representatives.
2. This estimate has been placed on the agenda of the IAC meeting scheduled for 10:45 Tuesday, 3 July.

William P. Bundy

WILLIAM P. BUNDY
Deputy Assistant Director
National Estimates

Distribution "A"

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Authority	<i>RAC review</i>
By	<i>MS</i>
NLE Date	<i>5/14/02</i>

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25 June 1956

SUBJECT: NIE 11-4-56: SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND PROBABLE
SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION THROUGH
1961

THE PROBLEM

To examine the political, economic, scientific, and
military strengths and weaknesses of the USSR and to estimate
probable Soviet courses of action through 1961.

Introduction - Soviet Developments in Perspective

1. The three years since the death of Stalin have seen much
change on the Soviet scene. The men who succeeded him have adopted
external policies which they deem to be better calculated to advance
Soviet world interests, and internal policies which they consider
more adroit for maintaining the Communist Party's control of the

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governmental machinery and of the population. This development has reflected their awareness of a changing world situation which had outmoded some of the tactics and policies pursued in the postwar period. In part, also, *change in the USSR* ~~this process~~ has probably been a consequence of long-term trends related to rapid industrialization, the spread of general education, and the creation of new social classes. The present leaders have sought to release Soviet domestic and foreign policy from the more rigid mold in which Stalin had cast it. Their modifications in his system have caused the Soviet scene to lose some of the static character it had acquired under the former dictator. It is not yet clear where this new Soviet flexibility will ultimately lead, but the fact of its emergence has become evident. To assess the problems confronting US policy it has become as important to focus on what is changing as on what is constant in the Soviet challenge.

2. Stalin's successors were confronted with the urgent problem of governing effectively a totalitarian empire whose whole functioning was based upon the absolute power of one man. In addition, they were confronted with a number of problems in both internal and foreign policy which Stalin had either ignored or aggravated. Though

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the resulting process of review and adjustment is likely to continue, an important stage in that process was reached at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956, where the new leaders presented their policies and programs in comprehensive fashion. They also demonstrated their intention to effect changes by their move to discredit many aspects of Stalin's regime and to reduce drastically his historical stature. As will be evident from the different sections of this paper which follow, the effort to correct abuses and errors in Stalin's system has affected almost every aspect of Soviet internal and external policy.

3. To date, however, the post-Stalin leaders have shown no inclination to depart from the totalitarian character of the Soviet state. Rather they are seeking to organize and develop the power of the system more effectively and to adapt it to changing conditions. Nor has the present leadership departed from the Communist conviction that the struggle between the Communist and non-Communist worlds will continue. It adheres to the fundamental Communist objectives of destroying free states and expanding the Communist sphere of power. Although the Soviet leaders are now relying more upon political and economic action than upon force or the explicit threat

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(Revised 25 July 1956)

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of force, they are pursuing their goals with undiminished vigor and apparently with high confidence. None of the changes that have come about on the Soviet scene since Stalin's death, important as these have been, suggest that the threat which Soviet and Communist power and purposes pose to the free world is likely to diminish during the period of this estimate.

3a. It has been suggested that the recent changes in political tactics and controls combined with the cumulative effects of industrialization and education might, *over a period well beyond the term of this estimate* transform the character of Soviet society in such a way as to deprive it of its ideologically aggressive motivation. This view suggests that there might be, if not a "liberalization," at least a greater degree of moderation in both internal and external Soviet policy. We believe that some such line of development is one historical possibility, but there can be no assurance that it will occur; if it did occur, it would require a very long period. There are no true historical precedents which permit a judgment as to how a modern totalitarian state, and in particular the Communist version of this unique phenomenon in world history, may transform itself over time. It can be argued that the imperatives which govern the behavior of those who wield power in such a state prohibit its changing according to the hypothesis suggested above, or

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indeed in any wholesome direction. ^{any event} Moreover, even in the absence of the Communist ideological motivation, the combination of Russian nationalism and the great material power of the Soviet state would still present a potential threat. We believe that there is at this time no basis for judging that the USSR will not continue indefinitely to be a danger to the security of the US and the free world.*

* State, Navy, Air and Joint Staff reserve their positions on Paragraph 3a as a whole.

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I. INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

"Collective Leadership"

4. Stalin's power had become so absolute that all organs of party and state were subject to his personal control. Upon his death, his successors were confronted with the problem of reconstituting the supreme authority in the Soviet structure of power. The Presidium of the Communist Party Central Committee became the repository of the dictatorship. This 11-man body continues to exercise absolute power, and despite the more frequent meetings of the 133-man Central Committee and other Party bodies, the Presidium is clearly the initiator of policy and the final focus of decision. Although the Soviet system is no longer a personal dictatorship, it remains nevertheless a dictatorship.

5. The Soviet leaders describe the arrangements which obtain at the highest level of power in the Presidium as "collective leadership." We have little specific information on the relationships among the highest Soviet leaders, but it is clear that these men are not of equal stature and authority. Khrushchev's public prominence ^{and} his hold on

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the key position of Party First Secretary, by means of which he has apparently been able to assign many of his proteges to important party and state posts, suggest that he is the dominant figure. For the present, however, whether as the result of a balance of forces among the top leaders or of a voluntary agreement among them, there do appear to be limits to Khrushchev's power, and there is apparently collective participation in policy *formulation* making.

6. A key feature of the relationship among the top leaders is the apparent subjection of the police power to collective control. Such an arrangement would be plausible, since it was Stalin's manipulation of the police power which enabled him to physically liquidate his opponents and brought about the excesses of the purge period. The present leaders, out of concern for the continuity and stability of the Soviet state itself, as well as for their individual safety, would probably not wish to see such a period return. The very great stress given at the Twentieth Congress to the "collective leadership" formula as the original and correct party doctrine, which Stalin's "cult of personality" had allowed to fall into neglect, suggests that forces are at work to prevent the re-emergence of one-man rule.

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7. We cannot estimate with firmness whether the present apparent stability within the top leadership will continue or whether one or another figure will emerge again in something like the absolute position held by Stalin. Even with collective control of the police power, there will almost certainly continue to be factional divisions, intrigues for position and influence, and disputes over policy. "Collective leadership" might break down over a fundamental divergence of view on some issue deemed crucial to the security or development of the Soviet state, or as the result of an attempt by one or a few members to acquire supreme power. Even if a struggle for supreme power should occur, we believe that it would be resolved (as in the elimination of Beria and the demotion of Malenkov) without open violence involving large-scale use of police or military organs, and without weakening the regime's control.

8. The members of the Presidium not only appear to be sharing the policy-making power, but apparently are trying to bring to bear on their problems greater realism and more expert knowledge. They have apparently broadened the circle of consultation, at least concerning the technical and practical aspects of policy. We believe that Soviet foreign policy, economic planning, and military programs are now more strongly influenced than formerly by the advice of specialists in these

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fields. This apparent freer participation and greater responsibility of professionals and experts has been one of the strengths of the post-Stalin regime. This development has probably greatly improved the morale of higher officials in the Party, government, and armed forces.

Party Reform

9. Beyond the stabilization of power at the very top level, one of the most important objectives of the new leadership has been to restore function and vitality to the whole structure of the Communist Party itself. The new leaders have apparently felt that Stalin's personal absolutism was causing the Party to degenerate into bureaucratic ineffectiveness. They regarded a revival of Party activism as necessary to make the Party a more effective instrument of policy implementation and mass persuasion, as well as to place themselves in closer touch with popular attitudes. Accordingly, the Central Committee and Party Congress are meeting at intervals prescribed by Party statutes. Local Party organizations are required to meet regularly and to adopt the "collective leadership" practiced at the top. There is renewed emphasis on practical criticism from below. The redefinition of Party doctrines and tactics at the Twentieth

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Party Congress in closer conformity with political realities, internal and external, was probably also designed to contribute to a revival of Party spirit.

10. The drive to revitalize the Party has taken place under the slogan of a return to "Leninist norms of Party life." The myth surrounding the name of Lenin, to which the new leaders have particularly attached themselves, probably in part to establish the legitimacy of their succession and in part to justify the changes being made in Stalin's system, has come to include the assertion that there was genuine "Party democracy" in Lenin's time. There was in fact freer discussion within the Party while Lenin lived and for a few years thereafter. But even under Lenin "Party democracy" meant that debate and criticism was combined with strict discipline from the top. The new leadership, in dealing with the Leninist concept of "Party democracy," has indicated that it will not permit criticism to impair discipline.

Relaxation of Internal Tensions

11. The claim of the leadership that it is reviving Party democracy reflects an acute awareness of one of the serious problems

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facing the regime. The new leaders evidently believe that Stalin's policies of coercion and unpredictable terror, even against the Party itself, had done much to paralyze active participation and initiative. This was true not only within the Party but also within the government and economic administration and in the fields of art and science as well. Coercion was no longer believed to be the best way of achieving the regime's goals and Stalin's death provided an opportunity to alter his methods of obtaining compliance. The size and complexity of the Soviet economy and the problems of increasing productivity and improving technology called for more responsibility and initiative on the part of managers, bureaucrats, and Party officials, as well as more ^{cooperative} ~~positive~~ attitudes on the part of the general population.

12. Behind many of the regime's moves in the post-Stalin period lies an attempt to strike a new balance between coercion and initiative, between discipline and freedom, more conducive to the attainment of the goals of the Soviet state. These moves have included the amnesty of many persons sentenced to labor camps, an easing in some degree of the forced labor system, increased security of the citizen against arbitrary arrest, broader cultural exchanges

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with the West, and measures designed to continue a gradual rise in standards of living. Industrial managers, scientists, intellectuals, and professional people of all kinds have been the principal beneficiaries of these developments. But there are also signs that the Soviet people as a whole may be acquiring a more favorable attitude toward the regime as a result of slowly improving material conditions and the increase in personal security. There is apparently a widely held opinion among the Soviet people that their lot is improving. This probably represents a considerable psychological gain for the regime as compared with Stalin's last years, and eases the task of the Soviet leaders in solving their current internal problems.

13. On the other hand, the regime has not lost freedom of action vis-a-vis the Soviet people. It has control of the whole apparatus of police power, although this apparatus has been moved somewhat into the background. It has not made any irretrievable concessions and could impose on the Soviet people any course that it chose. But the mere fact that the new Soviet leaders have made gestures toward appeasing the Soviet people is a source of possible future difficulty. While they would not need to anticipate anything approaching a loss of control over the Soviet people if they returned to Stalin's

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harsher discipline, they could do so only at the cost of a measure of disillusionment and alienation which would hamper them in the achievement of their goals. The cost in these terms of such a reversion would probably increase the longer the present milder policy was continued.

The Anti-Stalin Campaign

14. The intention to reduce the Stalin myth in some degree was manifest throughout the three-year period following the dictator's death. It was evidenced by emphasis on collectivity in leadership, by efforts to rebuild Lenin as the greater figure, and by growing attacks on the "cult of personality." This campaign led finally at the Twentieth Party Congress to attacks on Stalin himself, both implicit and explicit. We believe that this was the result of a deliberate decision by the leadership.

15. There were probably several motives behind this decision. The Soviet leaders probably believed that the move would advance their current foreign policy in many respects. The attacks on Stalin were intended to blur the image of aggression and subversion which had

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become associated with Soviet policy and to give the Soviet regime an appearance of respectability. The Soviet leaders probably estimated that the effects would be felt not only in neutralist countries but even in states belonging to the western alliance.

16. However, considerations relating to internal developments were almost certainly primary. The new leaders wished to repudiate Stalin's use of terror against the Soviet people and especially against the Party, to set up obstacles to a return to one-man rule, and to confirm the ascendancy of the Party as an institution. Moreover, they apparently found it desirable to eliminate the absolute authority attached to Stalin's past pronouncements in order to attain the desired flexibility in carrying out their new programs. The leadership probably hopes by these means to give the regime continuity and stability, and to free it from the hazards of a struggle for power to which a totalitarian state is subject.

17. Beyond this, there were probably motives which related to the attempt to improve the relationship between the regime and the people, by relying less on coercion and more on a voluntary response to attain the regime's goals. Probably the leaders felt that a dramatic

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demonstration such as the direct attack on Stalin was necessary to win confidence in the genuineness of their intention to solicit initiative, eliminate the abuses of Stalin's system of terror, and improve the material lot of the Soviet people.

18. There are clearly some risks for the regime in the reduction of so authoritative a myth/^{as}that surrounding Stalin. These arise from the implication that Communist authority, including that embodied in the present leaders, lacks the integrity and omniscience which it has always claimed for itself. The present emphasis given to the Party as the real embodiment of authority and wisdom is intended to counter this danger. The essence of Stalin's errors is said to be that he placed himself above the Party. Among the population generally and especially among youth this rationalization has apparently failed to carry complete conviction and there has been some disillusionment though this is probably temporary. On the other hand, there are millions of ordinary Soviet people who have personal knowledge of the injustices practiced in the Stalin era and who can be persuaded of Stalin's responsibility even though many may not absolve the present leaders of complicity. Among elite groups such as higher Party

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members, economic managers, government officials, and the professional military the move is likely to be approved, partly because they have intimate knowledge of Stalin's abuses and partly because they will welcome the promise of greater professional opportunities and enhanced security under the new leadership.

19. We believe that over the long run the regime will continue to be confronted with the problem of obtaining the benefits of a greater measure of individual initiative and responsibility within the framework of a totalitarian system. It will probably not be willing to depart very far from the methods which Stalin developed for the manipulation of power in the Soviet state. Probably the attempt to strike a new balance between discipline and initiative will either fall short of winning sufficient response or it will evoke trends which the regime will regard as unacceptable and requiring new measures of coercion.

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II. THE USSR'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNIST BLOC STATES

20. The unique authority of Stalin as a "world historical personality" was a factor in the close integration of the Communist Bloc. His death probably required some redefinition of relations between the Bloc states on a less personal basis, although this was certainly less true of the USSR's relations with Communist China than of its relations with the East European regimes. We believe that despite some friction and confusion, especially in the European Satellites, the transition will be completed without serious disruption. Throughout the period of this estimate the Sino-Soviet Bloc will probably maintain its solidarity of interest and coordination of policy.

Sino-Soviet Relations

21. The concert of action between the USSR and Communist China has remained strong during the last year. Close coordination has been evidenced in the campaign for increasing friendship and economic relations with non-Bloc nations. The intensity of Communist China's campaign to "liberate Taiwan" has been moderated, probably in accordance with Soviet tactics to "reduce international tensions." The Chinese Communists have frequently not followed the Soviet model on aspects of internal policy, but we believe that these divergences will not impair Sino-Soviet relations. The

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Chinese Communists continue to acknowledge frankly their dependence on Soviet aid and advice. The Soviet commitment to aid China's high priority program of industrialization was recently extended well into China's Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962) at about the same annual level that has prevailed for the last five years.

22. We believe that the USSR and Communist China will continue to be closely linked not only by ideological bonds, but by common hostility to the US, by an interdependence involving Communist China's manpower and strategic location and the USSR's industrial and technical capabilities, and by the advantages of concerted diplomatic and economic activities. There probably are and will continue to be points of friction in the relationship, but not of such importance to either party as to overbalance their joint interest in maintaining it, or to permit outside influence to affect it basically. Peiping's continued dependence on Moscow for arms, industrial resources, and technical assistance will probably give Moscow's views the greater weight on major questions of global policy. But Peiping's growing strength and prestige as an Asian power will probably give it increasing potential for influencing Moscow on Asian issues.

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Soviet-Satellite Relations

23. The current Soviet leaders apparently believe that Stalin's policy of dictation from Moscow of virtually all aspects of Satellite affairs was not to the over-all advantage of the USSR. They apparently blame the excessive rigidity of Moscow's control under Stalin for Yugoslavia's loss to the Bloc, although they probably believe that no other Satellite would be able to follow Yugoslavia's course. They apparently feel that a somewhat looser rein in internal matters which takes account of national differences and local problems will result in a sounder and more effective relationship. At the same time, such actions as the dissolution of the Cominform and the rehabilitation of Satellite leaders purged for nationalist deviation, which had the effect of depicting the Satellite regimes in an apparently more independent role, are useful steps in support of the USSR's current tactics in foreign policy. The appearance of a relaxation of Soviet control in the Satellites not only suits the general "relaxation of tensions" theme, but it bears directly on the campaign to bring Yugoslavia back into the Bloc and on the effort to obtain contact and ultimately a "popular front" alliance with Socialist parties throughout the world.*

* ~~The Representative of the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, reserves his position on this paragraph.~~

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24. The general direction in which the redefinition of the Soviet-Satellite relationship is moving now appears somewhat more clearly. There is apparently to be a much greater degree of inter-Satellite cooperation, although inter-Satellite arrangements will still be under Moscow's ultimate control. The Satellite regimes are being permitted to expand economic relations with the West, thus increasing their own industrial and trading effectiveness. Concessions are also being made to Satellite national sentiment. They are no longer obliged to sacrifice their own prestige by applauding all things Soviet. Recent changes in Satellite leadership, the new, though discreet, emphasis on the existence of "separate national roads to socialism," and the withdrawal of the charges of deviation against Yugoslavia are further steps in this direction. The picture which emerges, if present trends continue throughout the period of the estimate, is one in which the Satellite regimes will enjoy a real if limited autonomy in domestic affairs and ⁱⁿ one which their dependence on Moscow will be more effectively masked.

25. There are some risks for the USSR in this post-Stalin course, particularly in the possibility of exaggerated expectations ~~among~~

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Section II

in the Satellites. By permitting an atmosphere of expectant change to develop, Bloc leaders will probably stimulate new nationalist and reformist sentiment, even within the Satellite parties themselves, which could exceed the level that they anticipated or could safely allow. In the course of reversing Stalinist policies, particularly toward Yugoslavia, the USSR has weakened and in some cases destroyed the position of competent and dependable leaders. On the other hand, by seeking to maintain in power many of the leaders who were identified with Stalinist policies, the USSR risks disillusioning those who believed in its promises of greater independence and respect for national differences. Finally, the new policies will introduce a new element of complexity in Soviet-Satellite relations, with age-old controversies in Eastern Europe and differences in National tradition and temperament almost certainly increasing in importance.

25a. Nevertheless, the basic instruments of Soviet domination -- a core of Communist careerists whose first loyalty is to Moscow, the functioning of Soviet advisers at key points in the Satellite armies and police systems, the substantial economic dependence of the Satellites on the USSR imposed by Soviet-directed economic plans,

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and the presence or proximity of Soviet armed force -- will remain. Dissatisfaction among the Satellite populations will continue and, in the short run, may even increase and dramatize itself in sporadic protest movements. Over the longer run, if the regimes find it possible to combine somewhat less stringent economic policies with effective discipline, an increasingly resigned and accommodating attitude may emerge among the Satellite populations. However, if active opposition should increase, we believe that the regimes would employ whatever measures were necessary to maintain themselves in power even at the cost of abandoning their current effort to conciliate the populations under their control.

(Revised 25 July 1956)

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

28 June 1956

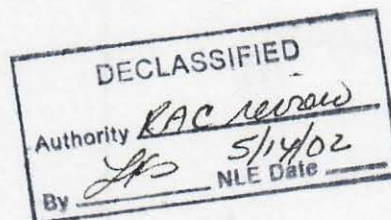
MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: NIE 11-4-56: SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND COURSES OF ACTION
(Part III)

The attached part of the draft estimate has been approved by the Board of National Estimates pursuant to a consideration of it by the IAC representatives.

William P. Bundy
WILLIAM P. BUNDY
Deputy Assistant Director
National Estimates

Distribution "A"



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