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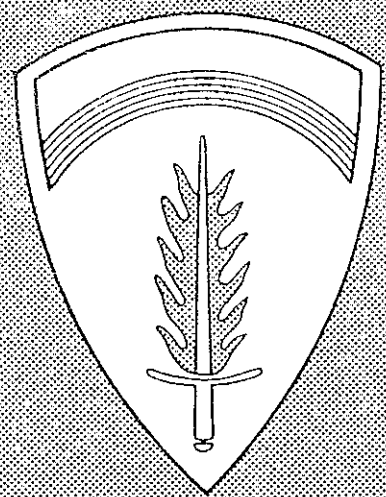
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SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 1-59
SOVIET/SATELLITE MILITARY COURSES OF ACTION
IN EUROPE THROUGH 1960



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SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE I-59

SOVIET/SATELLITE MILITARY COURSES OF ACTION IN
EUROPE THROUGH 1960

1. (S) THE PROBLEM:

To determine the Soviet/Satellite military courses of action in Europe through 1960, under various circumstances short of general war, and the most probable Soviet course of action initiating hostilities.

2. (S) CONCLUSIONS:

a. While the USSR continues to view Communist/Free World conflict as inevitable, the objective of the present Soviet hierarchy is to cause a gradual shift of the balance of power in their favor. Within this frame of reference, Soviet leadership is thinking in terms of long range evolutionary courses of action in which there are minimum risks of East/West strategic military conflict.

b. The deliberate Soviet initiation of a general war, or of a limited war in Europe during the period of this estimate, is improbable.

c. The Soviets will continue to improve their offensive capabilities through the introduction of advanced weapons systems into their ground forces for use in an expected condition of a balance of massive destruction capabilities and will maintain a preponderance of strength in East Germany in expectation of conditions favorable for the exercise of Soviet conventional arms.

d. In a war resulting from Soviet miscalculation, following a period of increasing tension, which during the subsequent two-year period is the most likely circumstance leading to the initiation of hostilities in Europe, we estimate the most probable Soviet offensive courses of action as follows:

(1) To conduct a rapid, limited reinforcement in the forward area to attain a preponderance of balanced forces. We estimate that this initial force would comprise 45-60 line divisions and would be supported by guided missiles, tactical atomic weapons, 12 airborne regimental combat teams, and approximately 5,000 combat aircraft.

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(2) Initially, to refrain from the employment of nuclear weapons in an effort to limit the conflict, compromise the defensive capability of the West and provide for the optimum utilization of their numerically superior conventional forces.

(3) To make a rapid, deep penetration to the West, with the objective of securing the west bank of the Rhine River. To this end, a major offensive effort in the Wetterau and Fulda Corridors, to reach the Rhine near Mainz, offers maximum advantages to the Soviets.

e. In the event hostilities occur during the period 1959-60, it is estimated that the Soviets would utilize only Czechoslovak and Bulgarian ground forces in offensive operations. In this circumstance, the Soviets initially could employ an estimated 9 Bulgarian divisions in combined operations in southeastern Europe against Austria and/or Europe and 6 Czechoslovak divisions in combined operations against Austria and/or West Germany. Such integrated employment, in consonance with the limited offensive capabilities of these forces, would be confined in scope, mission and objectives.

f. During the period of this estimate the Soviets probably will further reduce their forces in Hungary, and withdraw ground line units from Poland; we also believe that Soviet forces in East Germany will be reduced but not below a level of 15 divisions. k

3. (S) ASSUMPTIONS:

In an effort to determine the most probable Soviet/Satellite course of action under certain selected circumstances, this estimate considers the conditions which currently exist in Europe and those which can be anticipated as occurring through 1960, as the result of present Soviet/Satellite policies and indicated trends. Within this frame of reference, this estimate considers those conditions which could lead to either an unintentional, a limited, or a deliberate Soviet initiation of a general war, and presents the most probable Soviet ground campaign against Western Europe. For the purpose of this study, each European Satellite will be discussed as an individual entity within the context of the overall Soviet national policies and objectives. Such discussions will comprise an evaluation of Satellite military capabilities, effectiveness, reliability and probable integration and/or posture within Soviet offensive courses of action.

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4. (S) FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

Soviet Russia continues to increase her military capabilities through the development of a series of advanced weapons systems and has demonstrated the intent to maintain a preponderance of military strength in Central Europe. Retention of the European Satellite periphery is a fundamental Soviet objective and one which is vital to Soviet national interests. Currently, this Satellite periphery is basically a geographic asset, a "buffer" zone containing aircraft control and warning facilities, outer air defense rings, and is a salient from which the Soviets could extend their rule throughout Europe. While the Soviets are impelled by strong pressures to maintain their forces in East Germany, they retain a wide range of latitude and flexibility in deploying their forces in other areas.

5. (S) DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

a. National Policies and Objectives of the USSR: The Soviet hierarchy continues to view external relations primarily in terms of a basic and unavoidable struggle between "socialist" and "capitalist" forces -- a struggle which demands the continuous, relative improvement of Soviet power and position. To effect this improvement, in Europe, the Soviets are faced with two broad policy alternatives: to inflict a military defeat upon the forces opposing them; or, to reduce and undermine the relative strength of the forces opposing them. Because the great strategic importance of Western Europe has guaranteed an unquestionable United States military commitment to European defense, the Soviets, in considering the first of these alternatives, have been forced to think in terms of the world balance of power rather than in terms of local superiority. And because the world distribution of power has been weighted against them, the Soviets have been forced to forego the first alternative. By the same token, a policy of military threats and belligerency could only be counter-productive from the Soviet viewpoint since, without a genuine capability of enforcement, it could only serve to strengthen rather than weaken the Western defensive posture. Thus, strategic weakness rather than doctrinal considerations has led the Soviets to adopt the second alternative, which has been pursued with increasing vigor since 1953. This policy, usually described as that of "coexistence", has in fact, as the strategic power of the USSR has increased, contained a steadily increasing component of military threat. Since approximately the middle of 1957 it has exhibited the following characteristics: On

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the one hand, the USSR is presented as sincerely anxious to achieve an understanding between East and West which, on the basis of a mutual recognition of the status quo, will provide security for all and stimulate fruitful cooperation. On the other hand, Soviet capabilities for inflicting mass destruction and the manifest danger of a nuclear holocaust derived from continuing international tension are emphasized as the reverse side of the coin. In this policy we can detect four major objectives which, if achieved, would significantly contribute to the improvement of Soviet power and position:

- (1) Western recognition of the Soviet position in Europe.
- (2) Transposition of the Popular Front idea to the sphere of international relations, which would permit the steady encroachment of Soviet influence.
- (3) Repudiation of the Western Alliance by Western Europe and the consequent withdrawal of US forces from Europe.
- (4) The denial of atomics and thermonuclear weapons as acceptable instruments of warfare, which would upgrade the mass, conventional superiority of the Soviet Bloc.

The policy described above has been maintained without change during 1958, and constitutes the current basis for Soviet actions against the Western Alliance in Europe. Unless the current power balance is drastically altered in the Soviet favor, as a result of technical breakthroughs or other unexpected events, this current Soviet policy is likely to be maintained without change for the duration of this estimate.

b. Soviet Capabilities:

(1) Strengths and Organization - The present unit strength of Soviet Army ground forces is estimated at 175 line divisions, plus 20 supporting artillery divisions, 70 antiaircraft artillery divisions, and 95 independent brigades. These 175 line divisions represent varying degrees of "in-being" combat effectiveness, believed generally to fall in three categories.

The first, comprising approximately 50 line divisions, located in the western USSR, are maintained at an estimated 90-100

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percent wartime personnel and equipment strength and possess the best and latest Soviet weapons and equipment. The second group, currently comprising an estimated 26 line divisions, located in the European Satellite countries, are maintained at approximately 85 percent wartime personnel and equipment strength and possess a lower ratio of the best quality Soviet weapons and equipment. A continuing modernization and re-equipment program is evidenced in these westernmost forces. (These first two categories, consisting of approximately 75 line divisions, are capable of effective combat employment, with minimum preparation, at any time during the calendar year.) The third category, comprising approximately 100 line divisions, are normally in a cadre-type status, probably at no more than 30 percent of wartime personnel strength, but with all TOE type equipment available. These divisions could be brought to wartime strength and combat effectiveness in about 30 days time. While the "cadre-type" divisions probably have a lower ratio of modern equipment than do the Category II type units, their weapons systems are still considered to be effective.

Based upon an analysis of Soviet production figures, the initial introduction of new material into line units, and the re-equipment program in the GSFG, it appears that a phased and continuing re-equipment program is in effect throughout the Soviet military establishment. This program probably parallels the category breakdown of divisions and, in effect, provides for the maintenance of a selected number of line units to be at optimum combat effectiveness at all times. Consequently, we believe that following the initial introduction of a new piece of equipment into Category I type divisions, and upon the attainment of a certain TOE percentage of said item, the new piece of equipment is then introduced into the Category II type divisions and eventually into the Category III, or cadre-type. Thus, the equipment is, in effect, rotated throughout the various categorized units and upon obsolescence, into Satellite forces and/or military grants to under-developed, non-Soviet Bloc areas. Since it is known that the Soviet armaments industry is currently operating on a much reduced scale, such a phased re-equipment program would, in the event of mobilization, provide for the production and rapid introduction of full authorized equipment allowance into units that have operational familiarity with the latest Soviet weapons systems.

The Group of Soviet Forces Germany, constituting the immediate threat to the United States Army in Europe, is a

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completely armored force, consisting of 20 tank and motorized (or light mechanized) divisions and totals approximately 360,000 personnel. Culmination of recent reorganization activities in the GSFG has resulted in an increased offensive capability, inasmuch as the Soviets, by "motorizing" their rifle divisions, now have a balanced, mobile armored force capable of effective employment under conditions of modern warfare. The army and divisional level organizations underwent a structural change characterized by a streamlining of units, mechanization, and modernizing of weapons and equipment. As a consequence of these changes, the Soviet military establishment has evolved from a marginal, inadequately transportable force into a predominantly armored, completely mobile organization, with all elements of the infantry-tank-artillery combat team capable of mobile, rapid movement and concerted employment.

One of the more significant results of the 1957 reorganization of Soviet forces in the Satellite periphery was a strength increase in line divisions from 75 percent to 85 percent of wartime TOE and the attendant increase in Soviet capability to employ these "westernmost" forces with correspondingly less prior preparation and augmentation than heretofore required. This increased capability for rapid commitment has an adverse affect on the Western ability to provide a period of warning relative to the measures the Soviets would implement to increase their military readiness prior to an attack.

Since these discernible developments within the Group of Soviet Forces Germany are believed to reflect those changes and activities previously undertaken and implemented within the Soviet units in the interior of the USSR, the Soviets, especially within the past two years, have measurably improved their military posture while accruing world-wide appeal for a "reduction of forces". We expect this trend to continue.

(2) Support Capabilities - The Soviet union has demonstrated a high degree of technical progress and sophistication in its weapons systems. During 1958, Soviet forces in the forward areas continued to receive the more modern items of Soviet material and equipment. Within the GSFG the apparent introduction of guided missile units equipped with the SS-1 (SCUD) 100 nautical mile (NM) ballistic missile is indicative of the tactical missile

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capability being acquired by all Soviet ground forces, some of which undoubtedly now possess a 700 NM operational delivery capability. It is estimated that Soviet ground forces possess an operational 1,600 NM surface-to-surface ballistic missile and during the period 1959-60 probably will have a 5,500 NM ballistic missile with a limited operational capability.

Soviet air forces available in the forward area can mount in excess of 1,800 jet fighter sorties and approximately 1,400 light and medium bombers sorties during the first day of combat against Central Europe. This strike force probably would be rapidly augmented prior to the deliberate initiation of hostilities and an increase in sortie rates of 100 percent is well within the Soviet air force capabilities.

Utilizing only those aircraft organic to the Aviation of Airborne Troops, the Soviets could employ an estimated 20,000 airborne troops within a radius of 500 nautical miles, in a single airlift operation. This force represents the combat elements of approximately 12 airborne regimental combat teams. In a five-day operation approximately 50,000 troops could be committed by airlift against Western Europe. This lift capacity would be increased by about 1,800 - 2,500 troops for every 100 aircraft made available from the 3,000 transports of Soviet civil aviation and other components of military aviation.

While the Soviets have the capability to employ approximately 10,000 airborne troops within a radius of 1,000 NM (utilizing the converted Bull aircraft), the Soviets could stage the combat elements of their airborne units to forward bases in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, prior to initiation of hostilities. However, they probably will "mix" their airborne capabilities in order to take advantage of their glider and helicopter lift, their special operations units, and their large numerical potential, as well as their capability to employ airborne forces over extended distances. Targets in Western Europe whose early and rapid seizure would provide the Soviets with substantial gain and tactical advantage are the Rhine River crossings, Allied logistic complexes, airfields and the North Sea ports. In view of these factors, and in cognizance of the dependence of airborne operations upon the achievement of air supremacy over the target area, as well as the necessity to attain early ground gains, it is estimated that the Soviets will employ airborne units in support of front operations during the initial stages of