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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

7 March 1951


SUBJECT: NIE-29: PROBABILITY OF AN INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA
IN 1951

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia are to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. The USSR has not, however, indicated that it intends to try to eliminate the Tito regime regardless of the cost or within any specific period of time.

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2. It is unlikely that during 1951 the Tito regime could be overthrown by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt. Therefore, the USSR would have to resort to Satellite or Soviet-Satellite invasion if it intended to overthrow Tito in 1951.

3. The continuing military build-up in the neighboring Satellite states (increase in armed forces, stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.) has reversed the previous balance of military strength between the Satellites and Yugoslavia and has given the Satellites the capability of launching a major invasion of Yugoslavia with little warning.

4. A major, sustained invasion of Yugoslavia employing the Satellite armies under Soviet central direction and given full logistical support by the Soviet Union has the capability of forcing the Yugoslav Army back into the mountainous region along the Adriatic, and gradually extending control of the principal lines of communication to the major centers of that redoubt. The Yugoslavs would continue to resist, however, and would conduct guerrilla-type operations long after the collapse of formal military resistance.

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5. Combined Soviet-Satellite forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome formal military resistance, and eventually render guerrilla operations ineffective.

6. Yugoslav capabilities and morale are such that substantial and continuing Western assistance in military supplies and equipment would probably enable Yugoslavia to maintain organized resistance to a Satellite attack indefinitely, at least in the mountain area. Such assistance could extend the period of resistance even in the case of a full-scale Soviet-Satellite attack. Any Western material sent would have to be adapted to the special requirements of Yugoslav forces. Moreover, to be effective to Yugoslavia in the initial stages of an invasion, it would have to be delivered well in advance of hostilities.

7. Continuing large-scale Satellite military preparations indicate that the groundwork is being laid for a possible invasion of Yugoslavia. These indications are not conclusive evidence of an intention to attack Yugoslavia since there has been a military build-up in the other Satellite states in addition to the ones adjacent to Yugoslavia and since, in the case of Bulgaria and Albania, the military preparations could point to an attack on Greece or Turkey as well as Yugoslavia.

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Moreover, there is no conclusive evidence that military preparations pointing toward a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia are timed for an attack in 1951. Cominform propaganda since July 1950 has consistently advanced arguments that could be used to justify a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia, but there has been no recent trend in such propaganda suggesting an attack at an early date.

8. On the basis of available intelligence we are unable to determine whether the Kremlin has made a decision to attack Yugoslavia. The Kremlin may estimate that in 1951 such an attack by the Satellites could be carried through successfully without incurring effective Western intervention or precipitating general war. On the other hand, it may estimate that the Western Powers would give large-scale support to Yugoslavia, in the event of an attack, thereby making the operation difficult and costly and creating a greater risk of general war than the USSR was willing to accept. Finally, the Kremlin may be fully prepared for the eventuality of general war and may launch an attack on Yugoslavia regardless of the risks involved. Although it is impossible to determine which course the Kremlin is likely to adopt, we believe that the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations indicates that an attack on Yugoslavia

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in 1951 should be considered a serious possibility. We believe further that such an attack, if launched, would be made by Satellite forces with "unofficial" Soviet assistance as required.

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DISCUSSION

SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia are to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. Soviet control of Yugoslavia would greatly facilitate Soviet efforts to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean area and would eliminate a dangerous salient in the southeast European front of the Soviet bloc. Yugoslavia offers an approach for Soviet attacks into Greece or Italy, and is a potential threat to the southern flank of any Soviet advance into Western Europe. Moreover, and probably more basic in Communist calculations, the continued survival of the Tito Government as the only Communist regime not subservient to Moscow is an ideological threat to the Kremlin's control of the world Communist movement. The USSR has not, however, indicated that it intends to try to eliminate the Tito regime regardless of the cost or within any specific period of time.

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CURRENT STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. While there are elements of potential instability in Tito's position, his regime is nevertheless presently stable.

3. Among the elements of potential instability in Tito's position are:

- a. The fact that a majority of the Yugoslav population are non-Communists or even anti-Communists. Living standards are lower now than before the war. The resentment caused by the nationalization of the economy, by the campaign against religion, and by the development of police state techniques is still strong. In the Party hierarchy there is some criticism of the maladministration of the import program and of unsatisfactory economic progress. It is always possible that some of Tito's followers, though seemingly loyal, may be awaiting an opportunity to improve their fortunes at the expense of their leader;
- b. Tito's paradoxical ideological position, which hampers his freedom of political action. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice and any conspicuous associations with the Western Powers give substance to the Kremlin's contention

that Tito is a traitor to Communism and might cost him the allegiance of some of his more zealous Marxist followers who are indispensable functionaries in his totalitarian regime. On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, he may antagonize the Western Powers and non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia whose support is essential if national independence is to be maintained.

4. But despite these elements of potential instability, Tito's regime is presently stable:

- a. Yugoslavia's internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far failed. There is no evidence of effective organized opposition within the country and there are no serious personal rivals to Tito himself;
- b. Most of the Yugoslav people prefer the present regime to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow particularly since the relaxation of some of the more unpopular totalitarian measures.

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Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. Even the long-standing national minority tensions in the country are relatively quiescent. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western Powers, and particularly with the US, has met favorable popular response. In the event of invasion, the great majority of Yugoslavs would support Tito and resist the invaders.

SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR OVERTHROWING THE TITO REGIME BY MEASURES SHORT OF WAR

5. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Cominform propaganda has maintained a continuous campaign against Tito, and has portrayed him as a lifelong "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet orbit. The economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime; without the support of the Western Powers, Tito might have collapsed. This danger now seems to be over.

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6. Attempts have been made, and will undoubtedly be continued to undermine Tito's regime by the infiltration of subversive agents and saboteurs. Although the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened, Moscow may have some success in spreading the fear of war among Yugoslavs who live near the vulnerable frontiers. The USSR may attempt to stage internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It may subvert some elements of Tito's own party who hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

7. Assassination of Tito by Cominform agents is a continuing possibility. Tito's death would be a major blow to the regime, but would not automatically cause its collapse. Tito's chief lieutenants are as much committed to opposition to the Cominform as Tito himself. They would probably continue to adhere to the present principles of the regime. As a martyr, Tito might well be a source of strength in consolidating support for the present regime within Yugoslavia. Although stresses and strains would eventually develop in the absence of Tito's strong personality and leadership, they would not in themselves be likely to cause the overthrow of the regime during 1951.

8. Apart from the assassination of Tito, we believe that none of the methods short of war which the Krealia may

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use will even seriously weaken the present Yugoslav regime during 1951. Over a period of some three years the Kremlin has already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which it is capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed his successful stand has apparently strengthened his position with the Yugoslav people. He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will, therefore, require armed invasion to overthrow his regime.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

9. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions — two each in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania — and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

10. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria have been increasing steadily and now total approximately 460,000 men, organized in 35 divisions. Since January 1, 1950, the

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ground force strength of the individual Satellites has undergone the following changes:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>1 January 1950</u>
Albania	45,000	45,000
Bulgaria	145,000	87,000
Hungary	65,000	28,000
Rumania	<u>205,000</u>	<u>186,000</u>
	460,000	346,000

(In addition, the following internal security forces are militarized to a considerable degree and are suitable for combat: Albania, 15,000; Bulgaria, 43,500; Hungary, 5,000; and Rumania, 55,000.) In the case of Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary, strength is in excess of peace treaty limitations. With partial mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, total Satellite strength could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR. The armed forces of these Satellites are now estimated to be equipped with approximately 1,000 tanks, and reinforcements could be obtained on short notice from the estimated 800 tanks now with Soviet forces in these Satellites. Satellite air forces total approximately 750 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

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11. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but all Satellite forces would have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

12. There exists a further substantial Satellite reserve in the armies of Czechoslovakia and Poland. While, in case of need, these reserves might be thrown against Yugoslavia, the political and logistical problems involved in their use appear so great that this possibility seems remote.

YUGOSLAV MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

13. The Yugoslav Army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000 men organized in 40 divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons would restrict arms for additional units to light infantry weapons and some field artillery. This additional manpower would assure an adequate flow of replacements. Yugoslav Army weapons are generally of good quality, but heterogenous.

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Soviet and German World War II models predominate. Quantities are adequate to bring at least existing divisions up to T/O strength in most categories, with a surplus of small arms. Some ammunition stocks are believed to be sufficient for several months of war. However, Yugoslav combat effectiveness would rapidly deteriorate after D-day because of inability to obtain materiel to replace that lost in combat. Yugoslav combat units appear to be short of crew-served antitank weapons (including self-propelled guns) and tanks, and are particularly deficient in antiaircraft artillery.

14. The Yugoslav Air Force received an estimated 800 aircraft and a two year level of supply from the USSR about four years ago, but this source has been cut off since 1948, and the Yugoslavs are now in a critical period where their equipment has reached a state of doubtful value for sustained combat operations. Lacking outside military assistance, the capabilities of the Yugoslav Air Force will continue to decline rapidly during 1951. Aircraft now assigned to the Air Force are estimated at 650 of which approximately 350 are in tactical units. The Yugoslav Navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval operation.

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15. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro rather than the Danubian plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and since then have had fairly good training.

16. In present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav military capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to purchase arms and equipment from foreign sources, particularly ammunition and spare parts for Soviet and German equipment now in use. Some are manufactured locally, but production is slow, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities.

17. Substantial and continuing assistance from the West in the form of military supplies and equipment would probably enable Yugoslavia to carry on organized resistance to a Satellite attack indefinitely, and could extend the period of resistance even in the case of a full-scale Soviet-Satellite attack. In either case, however, such resistance probably would be limited to the mountainous areas of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro. Furthermore, the assistance from the West, to be effective, would have to be adapted to the special requirements of the Yugoslav forces,

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would have to be commenced well in advance of the outbreak of hostilities, and would have to be furnished on a continuing basis. In particular, the acquisition of certain types of equipment, such as antitank weapons and rocket launchers, could materially improve Yugoslav combat capabilities, but only after Yugoslav personnel had been trained in their use. Major assistance would be required to bring Yugoslav air capabilities up to those of the combined Satellite air forces.

VULNERABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INVASION

18. Most of the areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to invasion from the neighboring Satellite states. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward from Hungary through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could also be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley. Yugoslav Macedonia could be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria and Albania directed toward Skoplje.

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19. The industrial centers of Yugoslavia, on which the army currently depends for supplies, are located in the lowland border areas that could be overrun soon after hostilities had commenced. A considerable effort has been made to develop new industrial installations in less vulnerable areas, as around Sarajevo. The production of these plants would, as long as they could be kept in operation, partially offset the loss of those in more vulnerable areas. The better agricultural lands are also in the lowland border areas and food would become a critical problem in the early stages of the campaign. Rail and motor routes from Trieste and Fiume could, in the event of an attack from Hungary, be cut off at an early stage.

20. The large mountainous area which includes Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro is suitable for the organization and maintenance of a strong defense. Food and munitions are now being stored in the mountainous regions, but these supplies might be exhausted rapidly in the event of hostilities. Defense of this area, therefore, would depend on Western aid which could be supplied through several moderately good Adriatic Sea ports along the Dalmatian coast. These ports and their transportation facilities are, however, highly vulnerable to air attack. Also, the road and rail routes from Salonika are vulnerable to ground attack from Bulgaria and Albania. The mountainous

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defensive area would be vulnerable to enemy penetrations from the directions of Zagreb and Fiume if such penetrations were undertaken before the organization of defensive positions. Several points along the Dalmatian coast might be vulnerable to amphibious attacks launched from Albanian bases.

PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A SATELLITE OR SOVIET-SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

21. Tito's regime is unlikely to be overthrown by any small-scale or surreptitious operation. The destruction of the regime would require an armed invasion, either by the neighboring Satellite forces with "unofficial" Soviet assistance as required, or by Soviet-Satellite forces jointly.

22. The combined armies of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania, if given central direction and full logistical support by the USSR, could mount a sustained invasion of Yugoslavia which would force the Yugoslav Army back into the mountainous regions of Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro. The Satellite forces could gradually gain control of the principal lines of communication even in these mountainous regions. The Yugoslavs would continue to resist, however, and would conduct guerrilla-type operations long after the collapse of formal military resistance.

23. Under present conditions joint Soviet-Satellite forces could launch an invasion of Yugoslavia on such a scale as rapidly to overcome formal military resistance and eventually render guerrilla operations ineffective.

24. Yugoslav capabilities and morale are such that substantial and continuing Western assistance in military supplies and equipment would probably enable Yugoslavia to maintain organized resistance to a Satellite attack indefinitely at least in the mountain area. Such assistance could extend the period of resistance even in the case of a full-scale Soviet-Satellite attack. Such assistance, however, would have to include aid in the form of equipment which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units (which are now chiefly equipped with weapons of Soviet, German, and Yugoslav manufacture), would have to be delivered several months in advance of an attack, and would have to be on a continuing basis. In the last analysis, Western support would have to be on a scale large enough to neutralize the effect of Soviet logistical support to the Satellite forces.

LIKELIHOOD OF SATELLITE OR SOVIET-SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGO-
SLAVIA DURING 1951

25. Since early in 1950 there have been indications of increasing military preparations in the Satellite states. The strength of their armed forces has been substantially increased. These forces have been re-equipped with Soviet materiel to a large extent and have engaged in increasingly large-scale maneuvers, occasionally with Soviet occupation forces in Hungary and Rumania. Except for Albania, they have substantial numbers of Soviet T-34 tanks, and more recently JS heavy tanks and self-propelled guns have appeared with the Hungarian forces. Extensive gasoline and food rationing suggests stockpiling. Civilian defense measures have been undertaken. Increased registration for military service, including the medical profession, has been instituted, and security measures have been tightened. There have been recurrent concentrations of Satellite troops along the Yugoslav border and border incidents have increased. There have been rumors from Cominform circles of an impending attack on Yugoslavia this spring. The Cominform has since July 1950 consistently issued propaganda alleging that Yugoslavia intends to attack Albania and Bulgaria. For the first time Tito has begun to admit uneasiness. He is seeking arms from the West and has attempted increasingly to tie Yugoslavia to the UN program of collective security. He has improved his relations with Austria, Italy, and Greece.

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26. The foregoing developments indicate that the groundwork is being laid for a possible invasion of Yugoslavia. They are not conclusive evidence of an intention to attack Yugoslavia, because there have been military build-ups in Satellites other than those adjacent to Yugoslavia. In addition, the preparations in Bulgaria and Albania could point to an attack on Greece or Turkey as well as on Yugoslavia. Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence that preparations pointing toward a possible attack on Yugoslavia are timed for an attack in 1951. Finally, although Cominform propaganda since July has consistently advanced arguments that could be used to justify an attack on Yugoslavia, there has been no recent trend in such propaganda suggesting an attack at an early date. However, despite the fact that current indications are inconclusive, they are nevertheless of sufficient magnitude to require that a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 be considered a serious possibility.

27. The Kremlin may estimate that the advantages to be gained from a successful invasion of Yugoslavia would be greater in 1951 than at a later date. The Kremlin might believe that such an invasion would serve larger Soviet purposes by demoralizing and intimidating the peoples of Western Europe, by frustrating the implementation of NATO plans, and by rendering European governments susceptible to accommodation to the USSR.

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28. The Kremlin may estimate that in 1951 an attack on Yugoslavia by the Satellites could be carried through without incurring effective Western intervention or precipitating general war. The Kremlin might believe that:

- a. Yugoslav forces could not maintain successful organized resistance without military supplies from the Western Powers, and Western military supplies of appropriate types and in sufficient quantity probably would not be forthcoming in time to be effective during 1951;
- b. The present unpreparedness of the Western European Powers and their fear of general war would prevent effective UN action, leaving the US confronted with the dilemma either of intervening unilaterally or of refraining from intervention in order to maintain Western unity;
- c. The US, in view of its commitments in Korea and its obligations to strengthen the defenses of Western Europe, would be unlikely to allocate sufficient forces to the defense of Yugoslavia;
- d. The American people would not countenance an atomic attack by the US on the USSR in behalf of Tito, and would be unwilling to invite Soviet atomic retaliation before the completion of US defense against atomic attack.

- e. A Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would have the advantage of great flexibility. It would offer scope for increasing and decreasing the scale of Soviet intervention, and leave open the possibility of calling off the Satellites or negotiating a settlement if the conflict threatened to expand into general war.

29. On the other hand, the Kremlin might decide upon a combined Soviet-Satellite attack on Yugoslavia, in the belief that it could thus achieve such prompt and decisive results as to confront the Western Powers with a fait accompli before they could effectively intervene. Although this course of action might appear to involve a greater risk of an immediate atomic attack by the US on the USSR than would an attack by the Satellites alone, the Kremlin might estimate that even in the face of such direct Soviet aggression the American people would not countenance a US atomic attack on the USSR in behalf of Tito, and would be unwilling to invite Soviet atomic retaliation before the completion of US defenses against atomic attack.

30. In view of the grave risks of general war which the Kremlin probably would see in a Soviet-Satellite attack, however, and in view of the USSR's capability of effectively supporting an attack by the Satellites alone with "unofficial" aid, it is probable that an attack, if launched, will directly involve Satellite forces only.

31. On the other hand, the Kremlin may estimate that even a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would be difficult and costly and would involve more serious risk of general war than it was prepared to accept during 1951. The Kremlin may conclude:

- a. That in view of US-UN action in Korea, the UN would intervene immediately in Yugoslavia, thus creating a serious drain on the resources of the Soviet orbit and involving grave risk that the conflict would spread to a general war between the US and the USSR;
- b. That the US would launch an immediate atomic attack on the USSR. The USSR might find support for this conclusion in the strong US reaction to the Korean invasion, the extent and speed of subsequent US rearmament, US moves to rearm Germany and Japan, public statements by certain US officials advocating a preventive war, President Truman's general warning of last July regarding future Communist aggression, and Secretary Acheson's recent specific statement with respect to US interest in the preservation of Yugoslavia's independence. The Kremlin may also believe that US military leaders might welcome an occasion to use their atomic capabilities before the USSR had further built up its retaliatory and defensive capabilities.

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32. It is possible that the Kremlin already is, or in 1951 will become, fully prepared for the eventuality of general war. In such a case it might launch an attack on Yugoslavia regardless of its estimate of the risks involved.

33. On the basis of available evidence it is impossible to determine what course the Kremlin is likely to adopt. However, the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations requires that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 be considered a serious possibility.

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