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3 February 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Intelligence and Research
Department of State

SUBJECT: Comments by [redacted]

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[redacted] had information that Khrushchev was not going to rush things with the United States. He said:

"This foolish Menshikov business in Washington, trying to reach Mr. Kennedy and trying to make direct contacts now for some kind of high-powered meeting, will stop. The Soviets realize, we believe, that it was an undignified and rather reckless way of trying to get down to business with your new administration. They have been sounding out some of the uncommitted countries, and they read people like Walter Lippmann very carefully.

"Menshikov, who is no great genius, got his instructions. He followed them to the letter, as he would have if he had stood in the Supreme Soviet. He was instructed to get into action, so he acted everywhere and anywhere in his attempts to reach your President. Such a hasty method was not good and we think the Soviets are finally convinced of that. They would have rushed into a face-to-face meeting that could produce nothing useful at this time.

"Khrushchev will need talks with you in good time, however. He is in trouble. He is in plenty of it internally with his farm and other problems and in plenty with the Chinese. But that does not mean his head is about to roll. There have been some noticeable stirrings of the old Stalinist guard in various cadres in the USSR, but today they have no real leadership or organization on a national scale. They can delay and obstruct for the time being, nothing more. Khrushchev, we think, still needs some kind of accommodation with the United States in order to settle his own problems satisfactorily. He was in too big a hurry the last time. It was a shattering experience for him,

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according to our interpretation of the information we got from people inside and on the fringe of the Soviet camp.

"We must try to see it in its various stages. Khrushchev got the invitation to the United States by threatening to kick up a crisis over Berlin. It was an invitation opposed by the ChiComs. They are very suspicious of any deals in which the United States and the Soviet Union figures alone. It also gave some fuel to the old Soviet guard which grumbled about the futility of getting anywhere with the Americans.

"Khrushchev pushed the invitation line hard. He said it was absolutely imperative in order to carry out domestic plans and reforms. The armament burden is bad enough for the United States, but for Khrushchev with his own internal development ideas, arms costs are crushing. So we believe. Khrushchev said he had to go to the United States where he would try and produce fairly quick results. In the end he went, and we have reason to believe that there was consultation with the Chinese on it.

"Camp David was a disaster for him. He returned from the United States hailing President Eisenhower as a prince of peace. Everything would soon be regularized. Khrushchev, the practical politician, was talking like a dreamy-eyed bride. We know it shocked many of his closest associates. It also put various Communist parties around the world into a state of total disorder. The American President, apostle of imperialism, now a comrade, practically.

"Then, as you recall, Mr. Eisenhower went on a world tour. In Italy, we know that the Communist Party there got direct instructions not only from central party headquarters but from Moscow itself to be nice to Ike. They turned out, on instructions, with much more fervor than even the Christian Democrats. Quite a number of high party people in Moscow, not to speak of Peking, were upset by that Italian manifestation. To them it seemed that this Ike-Khrushchev love affair was going to get the parties into trouble.

"The U-2 would have been a minor, isolated incident if Khrushchev had been able to show that he had got something from Camp David. Worse than that for him, Mr. Eisenhower took the responsibility. So the U-2 became the big vehicle with which to defend himself and Ike became the unforgivable man of betrayal. Still, Khrushchev argues hard for the necessity of coming to an accommodation with the new United States administration.

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"In my opinion, I cannot see how you or the Soviets can slowly and in a well-prepared way get to something as complicated as a nuclear test-ban or a form of disarmament, which Khrushchev wants badly, without some American gesture toward the Chinese. We do not believe the Chinese, for one moment, will accept a United States-Soviet agreement on tests and then be asked to join in later. This they would consider a move you would make with secondary and small countries. They would not accept it. I don't think the Soviets could even approach the Chinese directly with such a proposal. It would have to be done with curves. In a way, both the Soviets and you have to work out some kind of parallel formula by which the Chinese can also be brought in or dragged in, as the case may be."

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (PLANS)

Richard Helms

Richard Helms

cc: DCI
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