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Document No. 46

NO CHANGE in Class.

DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Date: 27/1/78 By: [Redacted]

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Soviet Strategy in the CFM

The Soviet Delegation at the recent CFM meeting obviously was intent upon delaying or preventing the solution of most of the vital issues under discussion.

A major consideration underlying the Soviet strategy was probably the dilemma in which the Kremlin was placed by the announcement of the Truman Doctrine. The USSR could not immediately adopt a more conciliatory policy without offering confirmation that the President's program was effective in checking aggression. The USSR likewise could not harden its policy without encouraging increased support in the US for the Truman Doctrine. Furthermore, the encouragement which the President's statement gave to European anti-Communists may have increased the Kremlin's concern over its eastern European position and its determination to block an Austrian Treaty in order to maintain Soviet forces in that country and communication troops in Hungary and Rumania.

The USSR, therefore, may have considered it even more imperative: (1) to prolong the unsettled conditions in Europe conducive to Communism; and (2) to encourage the US to expend its patience and energy in a vain quest for agreement until forced by its internal economic and political conditions to curtail its foreign commitments and to leave Europe to the USSR by default.

The Kremlin now appears concerned over the reaction which its obstructionism has produced among the Western Powers. Through diplomacy and propaganda, the USSR seems to be seeking to reassure the West by insisting that the achievements of the Conference should not be minimized and that "time and patience" eventually will solve most of the remaining problems. For the present, therefore, the Kremlin appears to be pursuing a dual policy of preventing a European settlement while trying to keep alive western hopes that such a settlement eventually may be possible.