

CONF ENTIAL PROPAGANDA REPORT 23 DECEMBER 1953 NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN SOVIET PROPAGANDA Summary and Conclusions Soviet radio propaganda on atomic weapons is characterized by (1) extremely low volume of comment (0.09%), with almost nothing on new Western developments (e.g., atomic submarine), broken only by a few major Soviet pronouncements; (2) heavy emphasis on atomic control and disarmament, with avoidance of stress on Western military plans and preparation (including particularly references to radiation and implications of retaliation); (3) until recently, only minor (but consistent and perhaps indicative) differentiation of comment for different audiences, except that Americans hear a very high proportion of atomic control comment. This pattern of extreme caution may reflect the Soviet elite's own fear of atomic weapons. They almost certainly estimate that their own people fear war in general and the atomic bomb in par-ticular; the subject is particularly cautiously handled in domestic propaganda. After Soviet acquisition of the bomb the only marked departure from previous practice was the decline of material debunking the bomb as the decisive military weapon. Indications immediately following the Soviet thermonuclear an-nouncements in August 1953 that atomic propaganda was to become more prominent in the daily radio diet for all audiences were not borne out; comment dropped back to a very low level in the month prior to Eisenhower's 8 December speech. For the first time Moscow had undertaken something of a propaganda drive on this topic in French broadcasts and in its Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Greek beams; and the East German radio heavily attacked the stationing of atomic gun battalions in Western Germany, though without Soviet radio support. But these limited efforts ceased with two or three weeks, despite the continuation of aggressive comment on other topics tailored for these audiences. Atomic scaremongering in these instances was brief, indirect and short-range, not strategic; but it does indicate a greater flexi-bility on the subject than in the past. Whether this change reflects the narrowing of the power gap with Soviet acquisition of the H-bomb or is only a part of the generally greater propaganda flexibility observable since the change in Soviet leadership cannot at present be tested. The propaganda implementation of Soviet policy toward President Eisenhower's U.N. proposal may yield evidence on this question. CONFINENTIAL DECLASSIFIED Authority NND45358 BS NARA Date 8/20/0

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PROPAGANDA REPORT 23 DECEMBER 1953

NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN SOVIET PROPAGANDA

Discussion

The overriding characteristic of Soviet propaganda treatment of the atomic bomb is the extreme and consistent caution with which the subject has been handled ever since the first bomb was exploded over Japan.

One piece of direct evidence as to the reasons for almost complete silence on the initial explosions is supplied by the editor of an "important" Soviet paper in response to a question by Alexander Werth as to why this is so: "Our people are much too upset by the whole damn thing."* The editor might have spoken also for the Party elite, to judge by its public reactions.

The first two sections below review the general character of Soviet atomic propaganda. Section III uses the treatment of the topic in certain languages to gauge Soviet estimates of the psychological vulnerability of the audience to the atomic threat. The last section discusses recent trends.

I. Volume of Discussion: Very Low

The rarity with which Radio Moscow^{**} devotes whole commentaries to any aspect of atomic matters is illustrated in the following data on broadcasts for the one and one-half year period just prior to Malenkov's 8 August announcement of Soviet possession of the hydrogen bomb. Total number of broadcast commentaries on atomic subjects: 101. Total number of broadcast commentaries on all subjects: 112,040. Percentage attention: 0.09%, or one out of every 1109 commentaries broadcast. By way of comparison the following figures indicate volume of discussion on other propaganda topics of a world-wide nature during the same period:

Topie	Number of Commentaries	Percent
Korean War Peace Campaign Aggression Bacterial Warfare East-West Trade Espionage East-West Amity	9847 7271 5252 3384 1989 794 492	8.8 6.5 4.7 3.0 1.8 .7 .4
Atomic Subjects	101	.09

* Quoted by Frederick Barghoorn in "The Soviet Image of the United States," p. 163. Barghoorn's Chapter VIII is a useful review and analysis of the Soviet propaganda and attitudes on atomic energy through 1949.

** Spot evidence indicates that the volume, incidence and nature of press comment on this topic are the same as those of radio comment, a generalization true for most of the subject matter of Soviet propaganda.

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In connection with its positive appeals for control, the propaganda curiously fails to do much at all with peacetime uses of atomic energy. Occasional allusions to the general and prospective applications of atomic power are the exception. This failure is particularly strange in view of the way in which such propaganda could be made to complement the enormous emphasis given the peace campaign and to show the fruits which would flow from achieving international control. Perhaps it reflects one aspect of Soviet security, although the existence of a 'Davidov Plan' has been alluded to by the Polish radio.

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	III. The Beaming of Atomic Comment		
	While there is some tailoring of atomic comment for specific audiences, it can be said that no sustained propaganda drives have been mounted toward any individual country except the United States, where one-third of all the routine material was beamed in 1952.		
	<u>Germany</u> : Although Germany hears more atomic commen cept the United States, the preponderance is not gr applications of atomic energy are generally avoided atomic gun battalion was sent to Germany in the fal voted two commentaries to the event but avoided giv support to the considerable campaign mounted by Rad against the stationing of the atomic gun battalions	reat and the military Thus when the first I of 1953, Moscow de- ring any subsequent No Berlin in protest	
	<u>United Kingdom</u> : Radio Moscow does not dwell direct in its broadcasts to Britain. However, the theme o can aircraft carrier is frequently used, and Moscow detailed descriptions of U.S. air bases and the SAC * sion, and even implied the threat of atomic retalia Such material was less used in 1953 than in 1952.	of Britain as an Ameri- has broadcast rather hatomic bombing mis-	
	<u>France</u> : From Stalin's October 1951 statement throu single commentary on this topic was tailored partic listeners, and French-language discussion of atomic was at a minimum. This pattern was altered after t nuclear announcement by a limited propaganda drive	cularly for French matters in general the Soviet thermo- which lasted from mid-	
	September 1953 into early October. The material us that this drive was a facet of the "German danger" against ratification of the EDC. Apparently initia rival of U.S. atomic battalions in Europe, the atom tered out well before the broader campaign reached Thus, precisely at the time when Moscow was playing with obvious scaremongering and was voicing unusual national pride, it avoided full use of the atomic g ment and failed to sustain even a low level of atte	campaign being waged ted following the ar- nic propaganda sput- its climax in December. g up the German threat appeals to French gun battalion develop-	
	<u>Spain</u> : As with France, Moscow failed to carry thro propaganda drive to Spain following the charge that stored on Spanish soil as a result of the bases pace Moscow did not stress this charge in its pact comme quent Western press comment on Air Secretary Talbot storage plan provided the Soviet propagandists with theme, they did not use it. Nor was there any gene cussion of atomic control or related themes which m mere word "atomic" on the air.	t atomic bombs would be et in September 1953. ent, and when subse- t's reported atom bomb n a further peg for the eral increase in dis-	
A DESTRUCTION OF THE OWNER OF THE	Middle East:* Like the French, the Middle East courspate of atomic comment during early October 1953, away. The tactics behind the short-lived drive are cidence with other beams makes it improbable that is themes emphasized were banal (control and U.S. atom	which similarly died e obscure, but the coin- it was accidental. The	
	* Including Iran, Turkey, and Greece.		
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neither tailored for Middle East consumption nor tied to current events in the area. Probably the drive was a tension-inducing effort associated with the then-current denunciation of a northern Middle East Defense Organization. As in the case of France, the effort soon was abandoned, even while the accompanying greater truculence of Soviet broadcasts to the Middle East continued.

Viewed over a longer period, however, Moscow has routinely beamed a somewhat disproportionate volume of atomic comment to the Middle East. An exceptional case of such disproportionate beaming was the September 1949 TASS announcement of Soviet acquisition of the secret of the atomic bomb, along with roundups of foreign press comment. It illustrates one of the techniques for extreme but indirect scaremongering available to Soviet propaganda any time it is desired to utilize it:

Language	Number of <u>Items</u>	Number per 100 minutes of broadcasting time
Turkish	13	12.4
Persian	10	11.1
Serbocroat and Macedonian	10	2.9
Czechoslovakian	1	0.8
English to North America	6	3.8
English to United Kingdom	2	1.5

In the TASS reviews of foreign press comment at the time, the following was quoted from the BOMBAY CHRONICLE: "...a turn has come in the destiny of a number of countries such as, for example, Iran and Turkey, which hitherto lived under the umbrella of the American bomb."

<u>Other Countries</u>: The <u>Scandinavian</u> beam is notable for the fact that aside from major pronouncements it contains almost no comment on atomic questions. During the whole of 1952 one Vishinsky speech was the only atomic commentary broadcast to Finland, Norway, Sweden, or Denmark. This extreme avoidance contrasts with emphasis on bases and other aggression components in these languages. <u>Japan</u> receives more than its random share of atomic comment, but the focus is either on the Hiroshima anniversary or on such non-military aspects as Japanese failure to provide for children made homeless after the explosion. Similarly, Japanese audiences hear little or nothing concerning the possible use of the bomb in Korea or China, although such items are broadcast elsewhere. This suggests there is no effort whatever to imply that the possible use of the bomb on the Asian continent could have frightening consequences for Japan.^{*} Comment to <u>Yugoslavia</u> shows no Soviet estimate of particular sensitivity.

* Peking broadcasts to Japan in 1953 have been extremely low in atomic content, and some Japanese "protests" against the bomb beamed elsewhere have not been aired in Japanese. Peking's other beams, including the home service, have likewise given well under one percent of their total attention to atomic matters in 1953, although earlier--during the active phase of the Korean war--there was more comment. (For a partial review of this material see the three Goldhamner studies produced by the Rand Corporation.)

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PROPAGANDA REPORT 23 DECEMBER 1953

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Although the USSR had thus not changed strategy to include the regular practice of atomic scaremongering, it had made limited short-term use of atomic propaganda for tactical purposes to France and the Middle East at least. Limited and indirect as these drives were, they constituted a new tactic in Soviet atomic propaganda which supposedly will be used again if the need appears strong enough.

After the initial confusion of Soviet propaganda at the President's "atomic bank" plan, the official reply is being broadcast widely. Its treatment cannot yet be assessed at this writing.

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