



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

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# The Soviet Bloc Role in International Terrorism and Revolutionary Violence



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National Intelligence Estimate  
Memorandum to Holders



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NIE 11/2-86CL

March 1987

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**THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.**

**THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.**

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Treasury, and Energy.

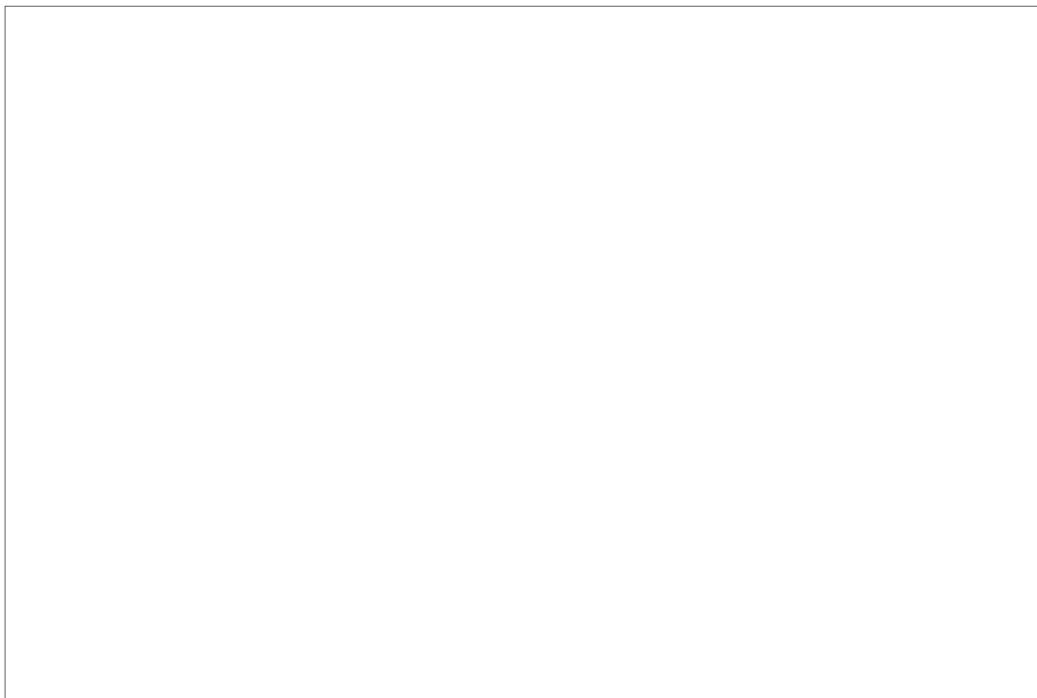
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The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps



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NIE 11/2-86CL

MEMORANDUM TO HOLDERS OF NIE 11/2-86

THE SOVIET BLOC ROLE  
IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM  
AND REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE

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Information available as of 2 February 1987 was used in the preparation of this Estimate, which was approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board on 25 February 1987.

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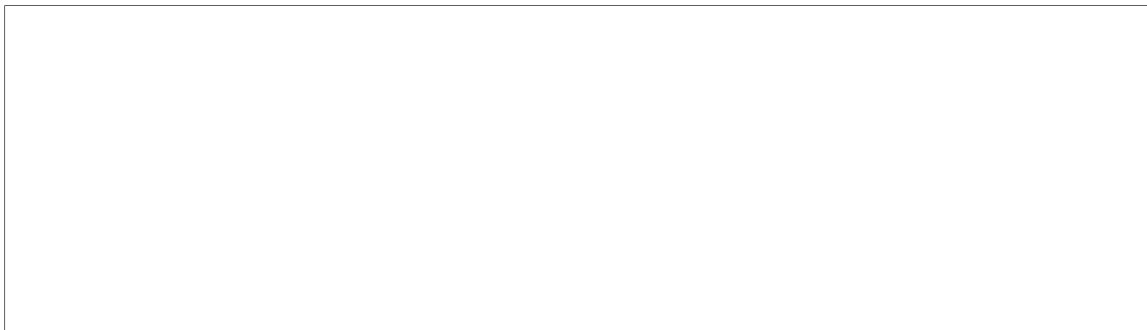
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### SCOPE NOTE

Since NIE 11/2-86, *Soviet Bloc Role in International Terrorism and Revolutionary Violence*, was published in August 1986, two significant bodies of data relevant to the topic have become available.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In addition, the Soviets in a number of official statements have indicated a willingness to cooperate in combating international terrorism. This Memorandum to Holders reassesses the Key Judgments of NIE 11/2-86 in light of the new information to determine if there is a change in our understanding of Soviet Bloc support for international terrorism. [REDACTED]

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The new information considerably expands our horizons, especially as it relates to Bloc states, and points out the serious gaps in our knowledge about the region's ties to terrorist groups, in particular those in the Middle East. It opens up the distinct possibility that, as collection efforts go forward, additional facets of the relationships will come to light. [REDACTED]

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### KEY JUDGMENTS

The judgments of the recent Estimate regarding Soviet attitudes and behavior toward terrorism and terrorist groups have been reinforced by recent information [redacted]

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[redacted] New information on the nature of ties between some Soviet Bloc states and the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), however, reveals a much closer relationship than was previously known. [redacted]

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[redacted] states that Moscow supports a variety of groups that use terrorist tactics on several grounds:

- Its Marxist belief in revolutionary use of violence.
- A perceived duty to help liberation movements.
- A desire to promote the weakening of the West.

[redacted] stated that the Soviets tend to avoid direct contacts with *West European* terrorist groups because they believe European groups are uncontrollable and can undermine broader Soviet foreign policy objectives. We believe, however, the Soviets appreciate that acts by these groups create disruption that damages Western interests, although there is no evidence that the Soviets support or direct them. [redacted]

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In the Middle East, the Soviet Union continues to provide support for the PLO. Although Moscow appears to avoid direct relations with more radical transnational terrorist groups, [redacted] suggests that the Soviets have a continuing "liaison relationship" with the Abu Nidal Organization. The nature of this relationship is unclear. [redacted]

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Under Gorbachev, Soviet officials—for political reasons and public consumption—are speaking out more openly, both publicly and in bilateral discussions, against international terrorism. Thus far, Moscow's more open public posture against terrorism has provided propaganda benefits without the Soviets actually having to alter their support to national liberation groups that utilize violence against noncombatants, or to states that support terrorism. The Soviets probably will be somewhat more cooperative with some international measures to control terrorism, but the political benefits to the Soviet Union of supporting groups that advance their interests will continue to outweigh the costs for the foreseeable future. [redacted]

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[redacted] reveals a more active web of relationships between Poland and East Germany

[redacted]

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and the Abu Nidal Organization than was known when the Estimate was published. We believe the Bloc has multiple reasons for maintaining contact with terrorist organizations:

- A principal motive is political—Marxism-Leninism calls for the revolutionary use of violence as a tool for destabilizing capitalist countries. Through passive assistance or a more active, supportive relationship with groups whose actions strike at Western interests, the Bloc regimes are cooperating with Soviet efforts to weaken the West without direct involvement.
- The prospect of earning hard currency also appears to have been an important factor behind the willingness of Warsaw and East Berlin to tolerate and exploit front companies. The ability of terrorist front companies to act as conduits for hard currency appears to be one motive behind Bloc countries' tolerance of these groups.
- The available evidence continues to indicate that in some instances intelligence and security reasons are still a motivating force. The Bloc countries do not want terrorist acts committed on their home turf. Some contacts provide intelligence about the groups' activities in the Bloc or about Middle Eastern events that could be useful locally as well as to Moscow. [redacted]

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East Germany reportedly agreed to provide military training to the ANO in 1985 and provided medical treatment to Abu Nidal himself in late 1986. ANO commercial front organizations are based in East Germany and Poland and have extensive contacts with officials of these countries, some of whom expedite their commercial operations and travel. Polish and East German leaders at the highest levels clearly are aware of the ANO affiliation of the front organizations. We do not believe that these commercial activities indicate that the host country has *control* over ANO's operational terrorist activities outside its home turf. [redacted]

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We believe the Bloc countries—including Poland and East Germany—routinely exert great effort to know about activities of foreign nationals in their countries. No foreign organization can operate clandestinely on their soil on a continuing basis without the support of host regimes. Because of recent allegations in the West linking them to terrorist organizations, these governments have stepped up surveillance and imposed even tighter controls over terrorists locally. They have occasionally refused or delayed entry into their territory of senior officials of terrorist organizations and, in at least one case, thwarted an

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impending attack. These actions are intended primarily to prevent attacks from happening in their territory and to improve relations with Western nations. [redacted]

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There is no new information concerning Moscow's attitudes toward Bloc countries' relations with such groups, but we continue to believe Moscow is aware of and approves of these arrangements. [redacted]

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Moscow may be taking steps to ensure a unified position on terrorist issues. [redacted]

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In accordance with the Estimate, we see no reason to believe that the Soviet Union's policy toward terrorism is likely to change significantly in the foreseeable future. Moscow is likely to continue to support "national liberation" movements while periodically condemning "terrorist" groups. In taking this approach, the Soviet Union can maintain its influence with client countries and not constrain the operations of terrorist groups that are useful to the USSR. [redacted]

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The Bloc countries' relations with terrorist groups are more susceptible to Western influence than those of the Soviet Union. As long as the Bloc states seek better ties to the West, they are likely to modify working relations with terrorists such as Abu Nidal if relations become demonstrably counterproductive. The Bloc countries may urge terrorists to be more cautious, but are unlikely to take measures that would endanger their relations with terrorist and revolutionary organizations that advance their interests. However, on the basis of recent experience, the United States should expect that terrorist-related information passed to Soviet Bloc governments about terrorist groups they support will be passed to those groups [redacted]

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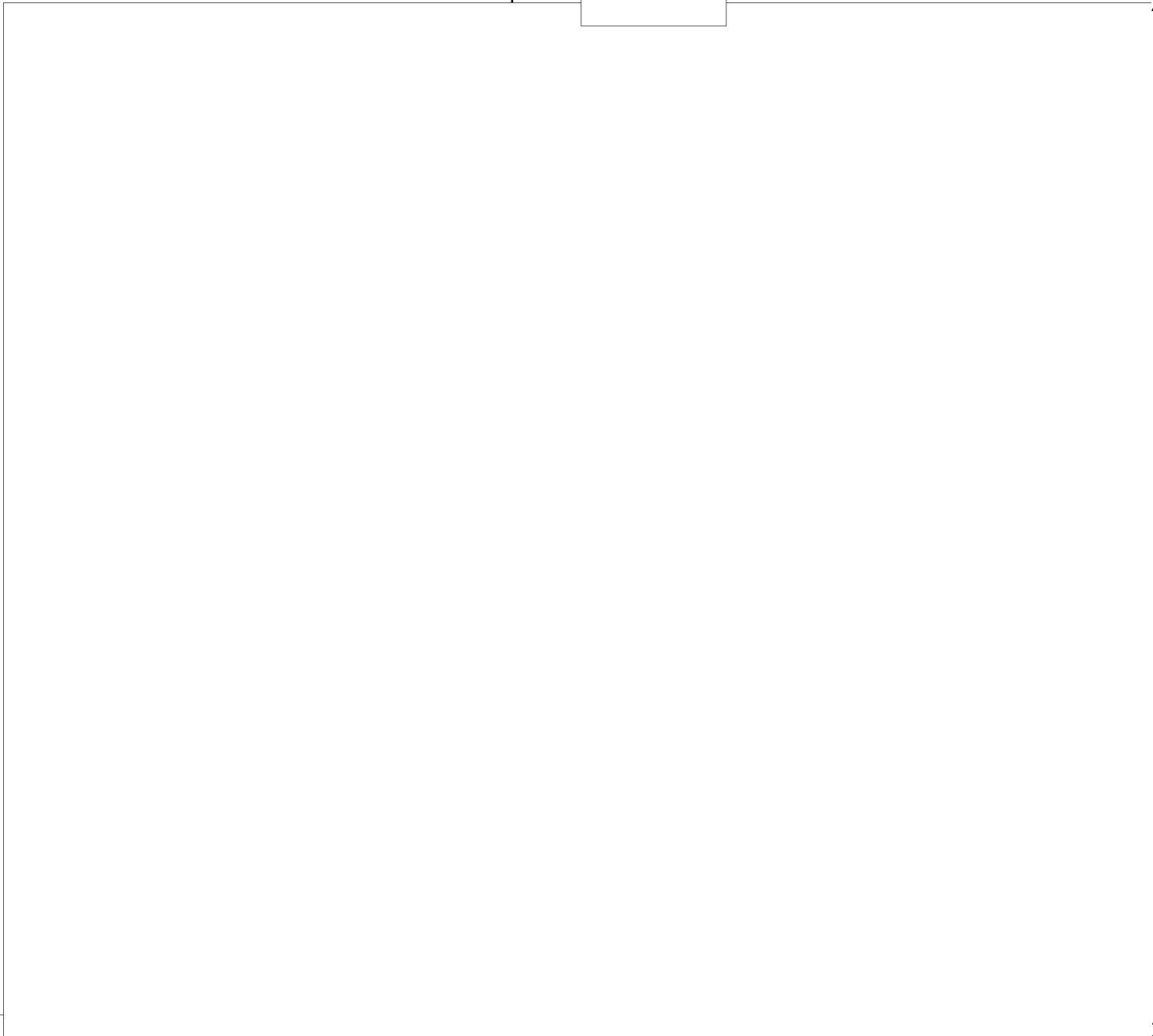
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**Outlook**

21. In accordance with the Estimate, we see no reason to believe that the Soviet Union's policy toward terrorism is likely to change significantly in the foreseeable future. Moscow is likely to continue to support "national liberation" movements while periodically condemning "terrorist" groups. In taking this approach, the Soviet Union can maintain its influence with client countries and not constrain the operations of terrorist groups that are useful to the USSR. 

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22. There are, however, several factors that could contribute to a shift in policy. In order to deflect international criticism of its behavior, the Soviets may adopt a somewhat more differentiated tactical



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approach. Moscow has, for example, discussed agreements aimed at preventing airline hijackings and maritime terrorism. The Soviets will also continue to periodically request certain national liberation movements to curtail attacks against a country with which the Soviet Union is trying to improve relations or negotiate an agreement. Such requests would be weighed against the possibility of alienating a client country. [redacted]

23. The Soviet Union has more latitude in its policy toward groups it labels as terrorist. In this case, the possibility of a change—measures to curtail the activities of the groups—would depend upon such factors as the threat posed to Soviet facilities and personnel, the potential for exposure of Soviet support, the level of Soviet control, or the degree to which the group's activities support Soviet interests. [redacted]

24. The exposure of contact with terrorist groups is of more immediate and serious concern to the Bloc states and is likely to lead to efforts to hide the contacts more carefully or to curtail them, at least temporarily. The Bloc states will attempt to follow a dual-track policy, but as long as they seek better ties to the West, they probably will modify working relations with terrorists such as Abu Nidal if these relations become demonstrably counterproductive. [redacted]

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25. In addition, the Soviets and Bloc countries will most probably expel known terrorists, possibly to other Bloc countries, rather than endanger relations with terrorist and other groups by taking harsher measures against them. However, on the basis of recent experience, the United States should expect that information passed to the Soviet Bloc about terrorist threats or terrorists that the Bloc supports will be passed to the terrorists. [redacted]

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