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PROBABLE SOVIET POSITION AT A CONFERENCE ON ANTARCTICA

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PROBABLE SOVIET POSITION AT A CONFERENCE ON ANTARCTICA

I. CURRENT REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF SOVIET INTEREST IN ANTARCTICA

A. Introduction

1. Soviet post-IGY plans for Antarctica announced at the Second Meeting of the Special Committee on Antarctic Research of the International Council of Scientific Unions, held in Moscow in August 1958, reveal an expansion in the territorial extent of Soviet activities and confirm previous estimates of Soviet intentions to remain in Antarctica for an indefinite period in the future. The announced plans show a continued Soviet determination to maintain a level of activity higher than that of most countries and at least equal to that of the United States. If other suggested activities are undertaken in the future, no doubt would remain as to Soviet intentions to surpass the US in Antarctic operations and scientific preeminence. The activities and plans of the past year demonstrate an increased Soviet consideration of political objectives, including some related to the forthcoming Antarctic Conference. The Soviets may even attempt ultimately to develop ostensibly scientific projects, using military-type facilities (rockets, earth satellites, scientific submarines), that could have an adverse psychological effect, particularly on the peoples of the Southern Hemisphere.

B. Post-IGY Expansion

2. Main features of the expansion include (1) the immediate establishment of a new station in Queen Maud Land about 1,800 miles west of Mirnyy, (2) preparations for undertaking a 3,600-mile transcontinental

scientific traverse to the new Queen Maud station, (3) plans for station activity in the region of the Unclaimed Sector, (4) overland geographic and geologic studies in the coastal zones of the new stations, (5) oceanographic research in the adjacent waters, and (6) Soviet-initiated proposals for the international mapping of the entire Antarctic Continent. With little prior indication, Poland was suddenly introduced into Antarctic research with the Soviet offer of its Antarctic station, Oasis, to Poland. Organizational changes were also made to establish a more permanent form for the planning, coordination, and direction of the Soviet Antarctic operations and research. The former Council for Antarctic Research was elevated to the rank of Interdepartmental Antarctic Commission under the Praesidium of the Academy of Sciences, USSR; and the long-standing Arctic Scientific Research Institute of the Chief Directorate of the Northern Sea Route -- the operational agency -- was expanded into the new Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute. Other activities in Antarctica that have been indicated in published statements include: (1) the possibility of using scientific submarines -- possibly even nuclear-powered -- in the Antarctic as well as in the Arctic; (2) the use of atomic energy, presumably for power generation; and (3) the possibility of launching earth satellites from both polar areas.

C. Recent Activities

3. The Soviets have been continuing their extensive IGY operations into the post-IGY period. Interior stations were set up (Sovetskaya, 880 miles from Mirnyy, February 1958; Pole of Inaccessibility, 1,366 miles

from Mirnyy, December 1958; and Lazaryev, 80° of longitude west of Mirnyy, February 1959) raising to 8 the total number of stations set up. Of these, 3 (Mirnyy, Vostok, Lazaryev) are operating this year (1959), 2 more (Komsomol'skaya, Pole of Inaccessibility) are to resume activities during the next Antarctic summer season, and the former Oazis station will be operated by the Poles. Oceanographic, geologic, and geophysical observations were made, /including the launching from the Ob' of 22 meteorological rockets (50-60 miles altitude): at Mirnyy; along the coast to Balleny Islands; en route to New Zealand and Australia, the Ross Sea, the approaches to the Amundsen Sea, Easter Island, and Chile; and exiting through Drake Passage. Geophysical observations were also undertaken at all stations and along extensive traverses into the interior. In addition, geologic investigations have now been made along the coast from 57°E to 165°E, and the aerial mapping and hydrographic charting of the coastal zone between 40°E and 166°E has been completed. In the Antarctic waters the scientific vessels of the Soviet Antarctic whaling fleet have made biological, meteorological, limited-type oceanographic, and ice-distribution observations. Particularly noteworthy was the dispatch of the entire 22-vessel fleet, after the termination of whaling off Balleny Islands (164°E), to explore ice conditions and penetrate as close as possible to the coast of the Unclaimed Sector (90°-150°W). Soviet air exploration extended westward as far as the Sp̄r Rondane Mountains (25°E longitude), partly in connection with the Belgian rescue mission. Observation -- visual and radio -- of the third Soviet earth satellite was begun in May 1958.

D. Future Activities

4. In addition to the normal observations at the 6 Bloc stations, the major task of the present Fourth Soviet Antarctic Expedition at the beginning of the 1959-60 season will be the completion of the scientific traverse from Vostok to the South Pole, the Pole of Inaccessibility, and Lazaryev. Extensive geographic and geologic investigations are to be undertaken, using Lazaryev station as a base, particularly in connection with the selection of a route for the trans-Antarctic traverse. In view of the recent assignment of the Soviet whaling fleet to explore the approaches to the Coast of the Unclaimed Sector, the Soviets may be planning to set up a station along this coast sometime in 1960-61. The launching of the first Soviet scientific submarine, followed by disclosure that the Soviets intend to launch additional units for charting in various parts of the world -- "particularly in the Southern Hemisphere" -- lends further credence to a previous indication that a scientific submarine will be operated in Antarctic waters. The initiation of the systematic recording of satellite observations points to the likelihood of preparations for the expansion of observation of satellite tracking as the number of polar-orbit satellites begins to increase.

E. Scientific Interests

5. The extension and continuation of Soviet scientific activities underscores previous estimates that a major Soviet concern is the collection of scientific data in a wide variety of fields, including basic research. Moreover, mounting evidence indicates that Antarctic research is an integral part in the Soviet study of the Earth as a whole. The Soviet

note of 1950 mentioned the importance to the Northern Hemisphere of Antarctic weather observations. Since then, repeated Soviet references stress the value of Antarctic observations to the study of world-wide meteorological processes, the study of the dynamics of the "World Ocean," the study of the earth's crust, and the compilation of a unified geologic map of the Earth. The goal of the Earth-wide study is to make possible the fullest utilization of the useful characteristics of the natural environment and to develop the means for defense against harmful and unfavorable phenomena. The Soviet scientists, therefore, "labor unceasingly to make man the true master of nature in Communist society" (Academician Igor Kurchatov addressing the XXI Party Congress). For so broad an objective, there is an ever-increasing need for observations covering as much of the earth as possible for increasingly long records. This is an additional reason for the Soviet persistence in its efforts to continue the IGY observation under the International Geophysical Cooperation (IGC) 1959, and to continue international Antarctic research through the formation of the Special Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) under the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). The Soviets recognize that organized international arrangements could provide the numerous research organizations in the Soviet Union with the most productive flow of geophysical, geologic, and geographic data.

6. There are indications that the Soviets may develop sophisticated scientific programs in which they could utilize components of weapons systems. Mention already has been made of the possible appearance of Soviet scientific submarines in Antarctic waters. Although the reported

Soviet contemplation of launching earth satellites from both polar areas (Nesmevanov, 1958) has not been confirmed, the recent findings about the Van Allen radiation belt and the fact that the belt is thinnest over the polar areas lends some credence to this possibility, particularly for future launchings of manned vehicles. The successful firing of 22 rockets in Antarctica last year and the firing in the USSR of high-altitude (nearly 300-mile-altitude) rockets for geophysical observations suggest the possibility that such firings might be attempted from the icy continent. In fact, it is not implausible that the Soviets, who lack a long-range missile test range, might even attempt to use interior Antarctica as the terminal point for intercontinental missile testing from the USSR. Such a test might be undertaken ostensibly as a geophysical research project with the missile carrying an instrumented nose cone for geophysical research. In addition to any such geophysical research data, the Soviets would also acquire data on missile performance and target accuracy over a range distance not now available to them.

F. Strategic Interests

7. Recent indications suggest that the Soviet Union might make use of Antarctica for military research. The possibility of using submarines has been discussed. There are also indications that both the Ob' and Slava have been engaged in military tests of some unknown type. The tracking of satellites and space vehicles used for reconnaissance is also likely to be of military value ultimately. Regardless of whether research projects using rockets, missiles, or submarines are intended for military

or scientific use, they are likely to cause anxiety among the people of the Southern Hemisphere.

G. Economic Interests

8. Soviet economic interests in the Antarctic are likely to increase with the addition of at least two more ^{whaling} fleets to the one that has been in operation since 1946. Although the economic exploitation of minerals seems improbable for a long time to come, it is noteworthy that the Soviets have engaged in mineral exploration as a part of their geologic studies and have reported the discovery of what appear to be extensive graphite, rare minerals, and iron ore deposits. The significance of such discoveries may take on importance earlier than is warranted -- stimulating concern in the forthcoming Antarctic Conference over the definition and control of national rights under an international administration.

H. Political Interests

9. We believe Soviet basic political interests are concerned with (1) strengthening of Soviet rights in Antarctica in order to maintain freedom of access to and research in Antarctica, (2) the fostering of the expansion of scientific activity, (3) the exploitation of expanding Soviet achievements to propagandize the superiority of Communist science and the Communist system, and (4) the building up of a posture of peaceful intent and friendly cooperation. For the Soviets to make claims at this late date, in face of the already numerous conflicts, would run the risk of interfering with existing scientifically productive arrangements. The reassertion of Soviet rights has therefore been held to a minimum and the commonplace type of cold-war propaganda has been almost nonexistent.

10. To strengthen their rights in Antarctica and maintain their freedom of access, the Soviets appear to be depending on the high level of their activities and accomplishments. Discreetly but persistently, Soviet publicity and propaganda emphasize (1) the great areal extent of their interior operations and the acquisition of unique types of data under difficult conditions, (2) the collection of information over previously untrodden areas, (3) the discovery and naming of numerous geographical features, and (4) the correction of errors or scientific inadequacies of previous expeditions. In addition to an extensive reporting of their activities through regular press and radio media, the Soviets are also able to gain widespread attention through voluminous publication of selected scientific results and active participation in all possible international scientific symposia and conferences. During the 1957-58 season, the Ob' visited 7 countries and was boarded by over 26,000 visitors. The purposefulness of such visits was disclosed recently by the captain of the vessel, who criticized Soviet maritime training of young officers as inadequate in public relations in view of the opportunities afforded by visits at foreign ports.

11. It is also noteworthy that the Soviet policy of seeking the widest possible contact and exchanges concerning Antarctic research activities and their results differs markedly from the restrictive policy in the Arctic, where the Soviets avoid all contacts, visits to stations, or free exchange of data. In the Antarctic the Soviets have gone to great lengths to establish the closest possible rapport with all Antarctic scientists through radio exchanges of operational experience among the various

Antarctic stations, support of proposals to broaden scientist exchanges between stations, willingness to answer calls for assistance, and the development of greater inter-use of facilities among expeditions. The rapport developed is subsequently utilized in Soviet publicity to establish an image of a friendly, cooperative Soviet Union engaged in peaceful research for the benefit of humanity. Furthermore, the wish is also repeated that such peaceful relations might be extended to other parts of the world.

II. SOVIET POLICY OBJECTIVES AT A CONFERENCE

A. Basic Soviet Objectives

13. The basic Soviet objectives in the forthcoming Conference are to (1) secure for themselves an indisputable right to conduct scientific operations anywhere in Antarctica, (2) eliminate all possibilities or grounds for the use of military force against them, (3) prevent the use of Antarctica for any direct military use as a base or as a military test area by the US, (4) secure for themselves political equality in any future definitive resolution of sovereignty, (5) foster arrangements that would encourage the expansion of international scientific activity, (6) secure membership in full status in any international regulatory or administrative body in which substantive decisions would be adopted by unanimous vote. As a corollary to these objectives, it is expected that the Soviets will also strive to keep any treaty agreed upon and related administrative arrangements as simple and general as possible.

B. Position on a Treaty for Antarctica

14. The Soviets are likely to make a sincere effort to draft and accede to a treaty that would secure their objectives. They probably

recognize that such a treaty would formalize political acceptance of their presence in Antarctica, reaffirm the spirit of cooperation and friendship already developed through the IGY and SCAR, better the prospects for increased scientific research and for a greater flow of data, and help improve public relations (particularly in Latin America). These objectives would be of value to their "world peace" campaign. As various additional features are included over and beyond these objectives, the Soviets are likely to become more difficult, particularly if these features were at the expense of or threatened to compromise their objectives. We feel that the Soviets are likely to subordinate political differences as long as prospects for drafting a treaty containing their minimum objectives appear favorable. To obtain their objectives, they are likely to resort to propaganda pressure, especially if in their judgment the prospects for a treaty begin to diminish. We believe that the Soviets may be difficult on (1) the principle of unanimity of vote on all substantive matters, and (2) the final referral of disputes to the International Court of Justice.

C. Position on Claims

15. In the present phase, with its conflicting claims, the Soviets are aware of the weakness of their historical position, resulting in large measure from the 135-year gap between the alleged 1820 Bellingshausen discovery of Antarctica and the Soviet entry into the IGY program in 1955. We reaffirm our previous estimate that the Soviets completely subordinate their interest in territorial claims to their scientific interest in increasing data collection. The assertion of a Soviet claim at this time

would seriously upset the current favorable and productive international scientific arrangements. Since the Soviets have found an abundance of scientific data available, notwithstanding the confused conflicts of claims, they probably want to avoid stirring up the problem and merely want to insure that scientific cooperation takes precedence over claims.

D. Position on the Prevention of Military Use of Antarctica

16. We feel that the underlying Soviet considerations in preventing military use of Antarctica are fivefold: (1) to eliminate all military equipment and personnel that might otherwise be available for use against Soviet personnel and facilities, and might prevent Soviet activities; (2) to prevent the possible long-term future build-up by the US of an alternative military base in the event that Communists gained control in Latin America; (3) to prevent the US from building up its Arctic warfare capabilities through cold-weather testing of military equipment and training of troops; (4) to prevent other US tests -- such as the Argus project -- which are overtly military in nature; and (5) at little or no sacrifice of their own limited military interests in the area, to provide a contribution to their general "world peace" campaign. The Soviets are well aware of the several skirmishes between some of the Western powers on the Antarctic Continent and on the adjacent seas. Furthermore, they are sensitive concerning the inclusion of an extensive sector of Antarctica within the Security Zone of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and are anxious to eliminate any possible military threat against them.

17. Since the primary Soviet interest in Antarctica is for basic research rather than for overt military research, the Soviets will be

willing to accede, at least in principle, to inspection and demilitarization. An agreement to this effect would not substantially limit even their military research, since the Soviets probably feel capable of undertaking practically any type of research without disclosing its military intent, using scientific research as a cover. Thus, a major problem in any treaty may be encountered in defining the limits of acceptability in the use of military-type facilities -- submarines, rockets, missiles, and earth satellites. Although ostensibly of scientific value, the scientific gains from such devices might be far outweighed by the adverse psychological effects of the show of Soviet military power, particularly among countries of the Southern Hemisphere. Any attempts to exclude the devices, however, would be resisted as an unwarranted limitation on scientific research.

18. The Soviets may object to arrangements that would subject all Soviet commercial vessels -- tankers and whaling fleets -- to inspection within the extended limits of the zone of Antarctic convergence as proposed by the Soviets. Since there are good grounds to suspect that both types of vessels have been associated with military tests, the Soviets may argue that tankers are used only for the supplying of whalers and that the inspection of the whaling fleet would force disclosure of commercial secrets and unfairly duplicate the control of whaling operations exercised by the International Whaling Convention. On the other hand, we anticipate no Soviet objection in principle to a policy of free access to any station.

19. Contrary to their policy in the Arctic, the Soviets have favored exchange visits at stations and ever-increasing contacts between Antarctic scientists. Year-round exchanges have been effected between

the US and the USSR, and several exchange visits have been made between Soviet and Australian station personnel. The increase in exchanges proposed by SCAR has been supported by the USSR. In fact, the Soviets may well seek to develop such ever-widening contacts and closer scientific ties in order to derive the benefits of closer political rapport and to propagandize the superiority of Communist science. Some difficulties, however, may arise in making arrangements for exchanges, particularly for year-round observer residence at interior stations where billets are limited. In this connection the Soviets are likely to argue for a strict quid-pro-quo exchange. Although the Soviets may agree in principle to inspection, some difficulties may arise concerning the form in which it is to be organized. We feel that the Soviets, in order to create only a minimum precedent for the broader problems involving inspection within the USSR, are likely to agree to an observer program organized along national rather than on supra-national lines.

E. Area of Applicability

20. The Soviets would prefer to have a treaty that would cover the widest possible area, e.g., the zone of Antarctic convergence, although they would be willing to compromise on the 60th parallel. This is related to their basic objective of preventing the employment of military force against their facilities or expanding activities. By extending the areas of applicability the Soviets would hope to exclude the presence of warships. Such a restriction would not limit their own activities significantly since they have already announced the operation of a scientific submarine in the Northern Hemisphere, and such a unique vessel presumably would not

be subject to exclusion if and when it was introduced into the Antarctic waters. Even if the 60th parallel were decided upon, it would still help to legitimize the presence of Soviet ships anywhere in Antarctic waters, and would also help foster the expansion of international oceanographic activity.

F. Broadening the Conference and Accession to the Treaty

21. The unexpected introduction of Poland into Antarctic research, followed by its hurried application for membership in SCAR and a request for participation in the pre-Conference meetings, appears to have been an attempt to test the mood of the eleven nations concerning possibilities of broadening the Conference and, indirectly, of the prospects of open accession which the Soviets want. The Soviet preference apparently is motivated by a desire to overcome the voting disadvantage of the Soviet Union at the Conference. Ultimately, it would offer a means for building up within any future international organization a bloc consisting of states having no vested political interests or rights as a counter to those states that have such rights. This would enable the Soviets to confound the settlement of Antarctic sovereignty along the present alignment of claims and prevent the claimant nations from using their rights as a pretext for interfering with or reducing Soviet or Bloc scientific activity. An additional consideration attractive to the Soviet Union is the prospect that the right of accession to the treaty may stimulate an increase in scientific activity, which would both dilute present claims and increase the flow of scientific data. Although we believe that the Soviets will not insist on free accession, there is still a possibility that they may

seek a compromise that would allow accession to countries that become members of SCAR. This would still leave ample opportunity for the accession of some countries which the Soviet Union could maneuver, as in the case of Poland.

G. Nature of International Administration

22. The Soviets will probably seek to limit international administration primarily to the attainment of their minimum objectives -- the guarantee of freedom of access, prevention of the use of Antarctica for military purposes, and the stimulation of scientific research. If adequate provision is made for freedom of research, the Soviets are likely to attempt to limit further international administrative arrangements to provision for inspection and demilitarization, and leave all scientific planning, coordination, exchanges of scientists, and information to the SCAR and its working groups and subcommittees. Through SCAR, the Soviets anticipate a continuation of the international arrangements that proved effective during the IGY. It has become evident to the Soviets that this effectiveness is the result of the relatively informal and flexible nature of program planning, acceptance, and coordination carried out in an atmosphere essentially devoid of political restraints and rigidities. The lack of formality became evident recently when the Soviets succeeded in securing ex-post-facto approval of the Lazaryev station site as a gap-area addition to the previously agreed-upon SCAR list of gap-areas. This approval was granted after the Soviets had already announced plans to set a station at the Lazaryev site. The US scientific representative protested at the irregularity of this procedure but was not upheld

by his Western colleagues on the grounds that the action represented an addition to the post-IGY scientific program. In an atmosphere such as this, the Soviets expect to have maximum freedom for scientific expansion, including even the possible approval of projects involving the use of overt military weapons and equipment that might not be approved by a political body.

23. We feel that the Soviets will object to any final referral of disputes to the International Court of Justice. They will insist that substantive matters would require political agreement and not adjudication and that technical differences must be resolved by technical experts.

H. Regulation of Economic Activities.

24. Since current economic activities in Antarctica are entirely limited to whaling, and prospects for future development on the ice continent are at most highly speculative, the Soviet Union is likely to object to any attempts at this time to make provision for economic development. In view of the control already exercised by the International Whaling Convention, the Soviets would object to adding any other form of control over whaling.

III. POSSIBLE SOVIET ACTION IN THE EVENT OF CONFERENCE FAILURE

A. Avoidance of Responsibility for Failure

25. It is our judgment that the Soviets are truly interested in the conclusion of a treaty incorporating their basic objectives. In fact, any reasons for possible failure to secure a treaty are more likely to originate in the excessively precautionary and over-regulatory demands of some of the other countries -- chiefly Australia and the Latin American

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nations. We further believe that the Soviets would go to great lengths to avoid being saddled with the onus of being the cause of the failure. To avoid failure, they might even urge a treaty that contained nothing more than the pious hope of "peaceful use and scientific expansion."

B. Possible UN Action

26. Failing to achieve a treaty of any sort, the Soviets would probably encourage the initiation of UN action, although they might prefer to do so through other countries -- Poland, for example. They would also support any initiative on the part of a neutral country such as India. In either event, the peaceful use and increased scientific activity by any interested country would form the premise on which their action would be based. Here again, the objective would be to secure the greatest possible assurance of freedom of activity and protection against any military action.

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