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NSC BRIEFING

9 July 1957

BACKGROUND: SOVIET FOREIGN OFFICE

- I. Repercussions of the purge may affect the Soviet foreign ministry but most of the ministry's personnel probably feel reasonably secure in their jobs.
 - A. Foreign Minister Gromyko may be the most vulnerable.
 1. He was one of Molotov's right hand men for almost a decade.
 2. He continued as First Deputy Foreign Minister under Shepilov.
 - B. Gromyko, however, is a foreign policy technician rather than a policy maker and he is not likely to have opposed Khrushchev's policies. In fact, he probably stayed completely aloof from political machinations.
 - C. His appointment as Foreign Minister seems to have been agreeable to Khrushchev.
 1. He was named to the post by the Central Committee in February 1957 at a meeting dominated by Khrushchev.
 2. If he has kept his nose politically clean in the recent Kremlin power struggle he may continue to be persona grata to the top leadership.
- II. Control of personnel appointments in the foreign ministry since Stalin's death appears to have been exercised by the collective leadership as a whole rather than by Molotov or Shepilov alone?

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- A. Molotov's prestige and political standing were progressively undermined until he probably had little influence on diplomatic appointments for some months prior to his replacement by Shepilov in June 1956.
1. None of the men affected by personnel actions after Shepilov took over appears to have had any special relationship with him.
 2. Six of the top eleven positions in the ministry and 17 of the 50 ambassadorial posts are now held by men transferred since Stalin's death from leading posts outside the ministry, principally high level party jobs.
- B. The conclusion, then, is that few, if any, Soviet diplomats are likely to carry any stigma because they worked in the ministry when Molotov or Shepilov were minister.
- C. The possibility remains that some of them became involved in the sinister plot of the "anti-party" group. If so, their sleepless nights now are only the prelude of things to come.