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A STUDY OF
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES
ON THE USSR
1950-1957

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NOTE

It is devoutly hoped that all statistics and verbatim quotations in this study are correctly transcribed from the National Intelligence Estimates whence they were taken. They have not been re-checked, however, and it is strongly recommended that none of them be used from this paper for any important briefing, memorandum, etc., without referring back to the original document.

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INTRODUCTION

This piece was intended to be a "validity study" of all National Intelligence Estimates concerning the USSR which were produced by the machinery as presently constituted, from its beginning late in 1950 through 1957. In theory the making of a validity study should be a simple matter -- get out the old papers, read them, and note whether the estimates turned out to be true or false. In practice it is not that simple. Indeed it is so much more complicated and difficult that it has proved in many respects to be impossible, and this study has turned out quite differently from what its author had hoped it would. Here are the main problems that arise:

1. Most of our estimates still cannot be labelled as either valid or invalid, because we still do not know the "facts" about the USSR even as they were five or ten years ago. Hence one is reduced to comparing an estimate made at one time with another made subsequently; this does not give a conclusion as to <u>validity</u>, but only one as to <u>consistency</u>. To be sure it may be justifiable to presume that an estimate which does not have to be changed over several years is a valid estimate -- but this is only a presumption, and it may sometimes be very wrong.

2. When we try to compare one estimate with subsequent ones, we find that they are frequently not comparable. In the presentation of economic statistics, for example, different base years are often used in successive papers, or different modes of measurement, or figures which cover different periods of time. In political estimates the attendant contingencies may be differently postulated, and so on. It is worth mentioning that the military estimates are by far the most easily comparable, perhaps because they have been standardized by the longest practice and tradition. This is the main reason why the military section of this discourse is the longest, and the nearest to being satisfactory as a "validity" study.

3. There are hundreds -- probably thousands -- of "estimates" in the corpus of Soviet NIE's. Some are in single sentences, some in fugitive words or phrases, some weightily and solemnly set forth. It would be weary and unprofitable to attempt to examine the validity of them all. Which are important -- which ought to be selected for testing? Presumably there is someone who had some interest in every judgment we made, but I have had perforce to pick and choose, doubtless omitting many matters that are esteemed by some as of first importance.

4. What about the little hint, or the passing mention, of a point that turned out later to be of first-rate significance? Shall we hail this as a triumph of the estimative process, or shall we condemn it because it carried no impact corresponding to its subsequently revealed importance? I have inclined to the latter view.

5. What about the general atmosphere, or "feel" of a paragraph or paper? There can be a generally correct impression conveyed despite a considerable amount of incorrect detail, and vice versa. Or one can make a "valid" estimate which is yet so limited in time-span, or so hedged with conditions, as to be invalid in a broader sense.

6. Finally what about the estimate which failed to be borne out by events because of some development not to be foreseen -- perhaps some US action changing the situation? Should we label the estimate invalid?

The effect of such problems is to render an "objective" validity study virtually impossible, except on a comparatively small number of points. Accordingly, I have abandoned any attempt to produce something

which could be of official use; this paper had best be kept strictly within the confines of ONE. I have felt quite free to use the first person singular, indicating that I am expressing my own judgment and making my personal critique. This being the case, it cannot be expected that everyone will agree with what is said. I have tried to avoid the reckless expression of personal prejudices, but I do not pretend that the opinions expressed here are the only defensible ones on the subject. In short, everyone must make his own validity study.

There are two rules I have generally observed, or tried to observe. First, I have seldom gone behind the published papers. To be sure, I have sometimes tried to justify the estimates, or to explain why they were what they were, or to show why some failures were understandable or inevitable. But there is no attempt to compare what the NIE said with what the contributions said, or with what other authoritative pronouncements may have contained at approximately the same time. Neither have I distinguished one agency's opinion from another's, save when such distinction appears by a published dissent. Since I participated in making many of these estimates I can often recall that the Board's opinion differed somewhat from that contained in the NIE, but I have ignored that fact. When I say "we estimated" something, I mean that this was what appeared in the finished document.

Secondly, I have tried to read the papers as if I were a consumer rather than a producer, and to read them, moreover, with only decent and reasonable care. We all know that there are various devices of language by which we cover ourselves. We put in escape clauses, ingenious disclaimers, qualifying adverbs, and areas of fine print which will sometimes, in a pinch, let us out of an embarrassing estimative commitment. I have tried to pay about as much attention to these as I imagine a reasonably intelligent reader would, and I doubt if a reasonably intelligent reader would weigh the exact significance of each syllable. When I think that the language conveys a certain impression I have examined the validity of that impression, and ignored subtleties which I think most readers would have ignored. This is one reason why I expect disagreement with some of the judgments expressed herein.

In spite of its inordinate length this dissertation is by no means a complete validity study. Some of the reasons for this have already been mentioned -- there are too many estimates to test, and too few means of testing them properly. Another reason, however, is that I have allowed myself to be discursive, and to write at undue length about various matters that interested me. For this I apologize, but I do not propose to spend the time necessary to prune and polish as should be done. The spring has come, and I have had enough of this job.

GENERAL SURVEY

The Soviet Estimates in General

Between 15 November 1950 and 31 December 1957 the IAC machinery ground out about 85 national estimates relating primarily to the USSR and its European Satellites. The count is bound to be inexact; I have excluded estimates dealing mainly with Communist China and the Far East, and those concerned with single Satellites. If one were to include these, and also the "World Situation" papers and various others having much to say about the Bloc, the total might run well over a hundred. But 85 is the lowest reasonable figure, and it is with approximately that number of papers that the present study deals.

Of the eighty-five, ten were what we now generally call "annual" Soviet estimates. The term is obviously a misnomer -- it does not properly apply to any of the papers before that of 1954 (NIE 11-4-54) -- but it will serve to designate those which treated of the Soviet Union (or the Bloc) in a general and inclusive way. Twelve were papers on Soviet capabilities to attack the US -- to this number may be added three on the probable warning we should receive of such attack. Six were about the European Satellites -- the Satellites in general, not

individual countries. Eight were about Soviet policy respecting Germany (or Berlin) -- this does not include a few papers restricted to the internal affairs of East Germany. There were four papers devoted to the Soviet nuclear energy program, plus four sanitized versions of the same, and four devoted to Soviet guided missiles (the latest of these was on the ICBM only). Two dealt with Soviet Air Defense, and three with the likelihood that the Soviets would initiate general war. One was on capabilities and trends in Soviet Science and Technology. All the rest we will call "miscellaneous," and anyone who wants to contemplate the richness and variety of this group had best begin by viewing the complete list as published in the annual "Index of National Intelligence Estimates."

The "Annual" Soviet Estimate

Scarcely had ONE started in business when there was issued NIE-3: "Soviet Capabilities and Intentions" (15 November 1950). This was a stop-gap; it did not receive the full ONE treatment. It is described on the title page as "an editorial adaptation of [redacted] with certain modifications and additions to bring it up to date." The Problem was stated as follows: "To estimate Soviet capabilities and intentions

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with particular reference to the date at which the USSR might be prepared to engage in a general war." This formulation gave the paper a powerful slant towards the obsessive question of general war -- a slant which was understandable not only because this was in origin a military estimate made by the military, but also because the recent intervention of the Chinese Communists in Korea had increased international tension to the highest point since World War II and awakened a lively fear of expanded hostilities.

NIE-3 runs to twenty-three printed pages. Much of it reads curiously now, yet if the problem set for the estimators be kept in mind the paper appears to have been a workmanlike job. The strengths and capabilities of the Soviets were concisely set forth. The whole world was surveyed, area by area, and the pros and cons of Soviet military action in each area were discussed. The conclusions were pretty alarming, but it was an alarming time. What is more important for the present study is that NIE-3, or more correctly the traditions and conventions of military intelligence as exemplified in NIE-3, influenced the form and content of subsequent papers to a marked degree. This influence accounts for the talk of "capabilities", of "factors influencing capabilities" and so on. Our "doctrine", insofar as we had one, was a doctrine of military intelligence. Indeed there was no other doctrine for us to cling to, and there still is no other.

ONE soon set about the production and coordination of its own general view of the Soviet Union, and forthwith fell into difficulties. Several interim papers were produced; e.g. NIE-11: "Soviet Intentions in the Current Situation" (5 December 1950), and NIE-15: "Probable Soviet Moves to Exploit the Present Situation" (11 December 1950). Not until 4 August 1951 did the first "annual" Soviet estimate appear from ONE; this was NIE-25: "Probable Soviet Courses of Action to Mid-1952." Once again the problem was "To estimate probable Soviet courses of action to mid-1952 with particular reference to the probability of direct hostilities between the US and the USSR."

Every old inhabitant of ONE remembers NIE-25. For weeks and months the Board wrestled with its problem. Successive staff members prepared drafts, argued them for a while, then were ejected from the Board's presence, draft and all, and another victim chosen. One Board member put his own august pen to work, and succeeded no better. The sounds of contention emanated from the meeting room even to the far-removed office of the present author, who at that time was unconcerned with Soviet matters. When the paper finally appeared the "period of the estimate" had less than eleven months to run.

NIE-25 is not one of the better papers, though it has the virtue of brevity -- there are only five printed pages. The argument is often tortuous in the extreme. Every separate thread of discourse appears to lead to the conclusion that deliberate initiation of general war by the USSR is unlikely, yet the paper winds up as follows:

> We recognize the desirability and the importance of concluding this estimate with a simple and direct statement of the likelihood or unlikelihood that the Kremlin will deliberately precipitate or provoke general war during the period here covered. Existing intelligence does not enable us to make such a precise forecast. /Why should such a forecast be called "precise", I wonder./ The USSR has the capability to launch general war and may decide to precipitate general war. Moreover, the international situation is so tense that at any time some issue might develop to a point beyond control.

It is easier to express disdain for this paragraph now than it would have been to write and coordinate a better one in the midst of the Korean war. Nevertheless, the Director of Naval Intelligence was bold enough to enter a dissent, saying that he believed it "unlikely that the USSR will deliberately choose to precipitate or undergo the hazards of general war during the period covered by this estimate."

The next "annual" paper was published in two parts, an Appendix, and a third part as a kind of afterthought. It is said that General

Bedell Smith wrathfully demanded that "capabilities" and "intentions" be separated. Anyway, the product appeared as follows:

NIE-64 (Part I): Soviet Bloc Capabilities, Through Mid-1963 (12 November 1952).

NIE-64 (Part II): Probable Soviet Bloc Courses of Action, Through Mid-1953 (11 December 1952).

NIE-64 (Part I)/1: Soviet Bloc Capabilities Through Mid-1954 (15 December 1952). "A Supplememt to and Revision of NIE-64 (Part I). . ."

Appendices to NIE-64 (Part I): Soviet Bloc Capabilities, Through Mid-1953 (24 December 1952).

It is worth remarking that the Appendices were concurred in by the IAC, not merely noted. The reason for the appearance of NIE-64 (Part I)/1 is obvious when one realizes that the "period" of the other estimates had scarcely six months to run w hen they were published.

Parts I, II, and the Appendices of NIE-64 together filled 45 printed pages. (A record high of 80 was set by NIE 11-4-56). The statements of the Problem omitted mention of war -- they were: "To estimate Soviet Bloc capabiliti s for political and military warfare, through mid-1953"; and "To determine probable Bloc courses of action, through mid-1953." NIE-64 is in fact the first reasonably complete estimate we made of the

Soviet Bloc -- political, economic, and military factors are all included. It deserves to be called the first "annual" estimate.

Next came NIE-65: "Soviet Bloc Capabilities Through 1957" (16 June 1953). As the title indicates this paper of 15 pages confined itself to a treatment of capabilities and the factors affecting them. It was prefaced by an Assumption: "That there will not be general war within the period of this estimate." The four-year period was longer than we had previously risked committing ourselves to.

On 24 August 1953 appeared NIE-90: "Soviet Bloc Capabilities Through Mid-1955." This was followed on 25 September by NIE-95: "Probable Soviet Bloc Courses of Action Through Mid-1955," and by Appendices issued on 15 October. These three documents together constitute the second complete "annual" estimate, covering a period of two years. In June 1954 an interim short paper was produced -- NIE 11-5-54: "Soviet Capabilities and Main Lines of Policy Through Mid-1959." This was a brief pre-view of NIE 11-4-54, which came out in September, and being published all in one volume, and covering a period of five years, was the first annual estimate to take on the form currently familiar to us. In due course NIE's 11-3-55, 11-4-56 and 11-4-57 appeared.

The most obvious development in the history of these "annual" Soviet estimates has been their increase in size -- up to a total of 80 printed pages in NIE 11-4-56, then back down to 63 in NIE 11-4-57. This has been partly owing to a fuller treatment of all the subjects considered: the military sections, for example, have become much more detailed, though treatment of Satellite and Chinese military strengths was abandoned with NIE 11-5-56. Political sections, both on domestic and foreign affairs, have grown luxuriantly. Most striking of all has been the development of the economic section, which came to full flower in NIE 11-4-54 and reflected the maturing capabilities of ORR. In somewhat the same way the Scientific and Technical section has expanded. New sections have been added: e.g. on the Soviet Estimate of the World Situation in NIE-95, and on Soviet Strategy for the Initial Phase of a General War in NIE 11-4-56.

There was, however, a subtler change which came over these papers, and which is difficult to define without distorting. One may say that they have become more objective, more academic, less tinged with emotion, more descriptive and less hortatory. None of these adjectives is exactly accurate or altogether fair. Perhaps it will be better to illustrate what happened than to attempt to analyze it.

Most important is the fact that the sheer increase in volume, the proliferation of detail, and the addition of new subjects, changed the tone of these estimates. The economic sections and those on domestic political affairs in the USSR have become quite learned disquisitions; one can read many paragraphs as if they described an empire the actions and intentions of which were of only academic interest to Americans. In the earlier papers, on the other hand, one seldom goes unreminded, even for a sentence, of the imminent and dreadful threat. This is partly because there were many fewer sentences in the earlier papers, and they were therefore nearly all directed to matters of the most pressing and immediate concern. There was no time for extended analysis. It was partly also because the climate of opinion in the intelligence community, and outside it as well, was conducive to alarm and distress, and to all sorts of horrific imaginings.

Consider also the matter of headings. Right through NIE-90 (September 1953) all the political, economic and scientific material is put under a heading: "Non-Military Factors Affecting Bloc Capabilities." With NIE 11-4-54, however, there appears a Table of Contents listing Political, Economic, Military, and other matters all separately and all equal. There is nothing wrong with either system -- the earlier followed

the conventions of a military intelligence estimate -- but there is a change in the "feel" of the papers after the earlier heading is abandoned.

Then there is the subject of "Political Warfare." Again right through NIE-90 (and its Appendices) there are extensive sections on "Political Warfare Strengths and Capabilities." Political Warfare is defined at length in a footnote to NIE-95; it is said to include not only infiltration, subversion, propaganda etc., but also diplomatic action, both through normal intergovernmental channels and in such international organizations as the UN, political and economic pressures and inducements, trade union activities, the fomenting of civil war and colonial revolt, and so on. Moreover, the words "political warfare" are constantly reiterated throughout the early papers. With NIE 11-4-54, however, the section on Political Warfare is abandoned, and the phrase itself virtually disappears.

This harping on "political Warfare" had the effect (and was intended to have the effect) of constantly reminding the reader that every act of the Soviet government was an act of war. I am not now concerned with whether or not this was correct, or whether it was a good thing to indoctrinate the reader in this fashion. All I wish to note is that when the phrase "political warfare" slipped into the background, there was a change in the tone of the papers.

Finally, there was naturally a profound change in feeling when deliberate initiation of general war by the Soviets was agreed to be unlikely. This occurred fairly early -- in NIE-48 (8 January 1952) to be exact -- but it took a little time to sink in. The sense of imminent danger diminished, and the tone of the estimates changed accordingly.

All this is not to say that the estimates after 1953 became complacent or optimistic. There continue to be many passages setting forth the wickedness of Communism and the threat to US security; indeed these things are treated at greater length and with greater detail than in earlier papers. It is explicitly and eloquently said that the Communist leaders view the world as an arena of conflict, unremitting and relentless. Yet the emphasis is subtly different; there is much material in the papers which is only indirectly related to the conflict; and the reader probably does not get as scared. One may perhaps best express the change by saying that earlier papers described an imminent threat to the US; later papers described the Soviet Union.

The Papers on "Capabilities to Attack the US".

There is little that needs to be said in general about these papers, but a chronological list of them may be interesting, for I daresay most of us have forgotten how busy we were with this subject from the very earliest days. Here is the product:

NIE-18 (10 January 1951); The Probability of Soviet Employment of BW and CW in the Event of Attacks upon the US.

NIE-31 (4 September 1951); Soviet Capabilities for Clandestine Attack Against the US with Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Vulnerability of the US to such Attack (Mid-1951 to Mid-1952).

SE-10 (15 September 1951); Soviet Capabilities for a Surprise Attack on the Continental United States before July 1952.

SE-14 (23 October 1951); Soviet Capabilities for a Military Attack on the United States before July 1952.

SE-36 (5 March 1953); Soviet Capabilities for Attack on the US Through Mid-1955.

SE-36/1 (3 August 1953); Soviet Capabilities for Attack on the US Through Mid-1955.

SNIE-11-2-54 (24 February 1954); Soviet Capabilities for Attack on the US Through 1957.

NIE 11-7-54 (17 August); Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attacks on the US and Key Overseas Installations Through 1 July 1957.

NIE 11-7-55 (23 June); Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attacks on the US and Key Overseas Installations and Forces Through 1 July 1958.

SNIE 11-10-55 (2 August); Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attacks on the US and Key Overseas Installations and Forces in 1965.

NIE 11-56 (6 March); Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attack on the US and Key Overseas Installations and Forces Through Mid-1959.

SNIE 11-6-57 (15 January); Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attack on the Continental US in Mid-1960.

Let no one believe that the earlier of these papers were primitive and unsophisticated efforts; SE-15 covers the subject admirably, and is almost as long as NIE 11-56 -- the longest.

These papers exemplify a special kind of intelligence estimate -- the "capability study." They were prepared for a particular purpose. For consumers who knew what capability studies were they were good and useful, but to a more innocent reader they must have appeared alarming in the extreme -- or perhaps somewhat ridiculous, for the spectacle of clouds of TU-4's attacking the continental United States was scarcely convincing. Yet, indubitably, the TU-4's could do so, and this was what the papers had to set forth.

The trouble with these capability studies is that while in theory they describe everything the enemy could possibly do, actually they rarely go so far. In the name of feasibility and reasonability they subtract a good deal from what is possible. Hence they give us something which is almost certainly outside the bounds of probability, yet within the bounds of possibility. This is good stuff for the particular people who need capability studies and know how to use them. For the ordinary mortal, these papers contained enough verisimilitude to scare him out of his wits, yet probably not enough to give him a really legitimate fright.

Other Papers

Under this heading I would like merely to re-emphasize the fact that while more than eighty NIEs have been reviewed for this study, many that might have been included have been omitted. For example: papers on the World Situation; estimates of the effect of increasing nuclear weapons capabilities; estimates of Far Eastern matters and of Communist China; estimates of Middle Eastern and Western European affairs; and so on. Virtually all published estimates contain something about the USSR, but they have not been taken into account in preparing this study. Moreover, the reader must not expect to find references in the following pages to each of the 85 NIE's under consideration. Most of them are not mentioned at all. A validity study which attempted to cover them would occupy several volumes.

Validity of the Estimates

There is one compelling reason apart from that of convenience for attempting at this point a general statement as to the validity of these estimates. In following chapters a considerable number of invalidities, inadequacies, and other varieties of blunder are dragged out of past

NIE's and put on display. There is also note of a good number of valid estimates and correct forecasts. But the impression may nevertheless be given that failures substantially outweighed successes. This would be an unjust and wrong impression, and can only be set right by some sort of generalized account.

Before attempting to strike a balance and arrive at a net judgment, however, let me present some specifics, and first a list of the principal errors, omissions, and failures in the Soviet NIE's. Most of these are discussed at greater length in the following chapters. They are here briefly stated, in rough order of importance -- or at least in what I think to be order of importance, for on this point opinions may well differ. We will begin with three truly serious examples:

(a) We wholly failed to foresee, and for a long time we even failed adequately to recognize and describe, the changes in the character and conduct of Soviet policy -- especially foreign policy -- that occurred after the death of Stalin.

(b) We failed to foresee the upheavals in the European Satellites that occurred late in 1956 or even to hint that such upheavals were possible. Indeed, in 1955 we estimated that "popular resistance of an organized and active kind is unlikely to appear in any of the Satellites during the period [to mid-1960]."

(c) We failed to foresee Soviet intervention in the Middle East in late 1955. On the contrary, we estimated in the middle of 1955 that Southeast Asia would "almost certainly appear to the USSR to be the most profitable field for the extension of Communist influence, at least during the early period of this estimate."

To this list might be added one other item which would be of equal importance if it could with equal assurance be judged a mis-estimate. In earlier papers we played up very greatly the idea of general war, devoted much emphasis and attention to it, and conveyed a notion that it loomed large in the minds of the Soviet leaders. Hindsight suggests that we may have overdone this -- that the Soviet leaders never seriously contemplated general war. If this hindsight is correct, we did our consumers a grave disservice. For many and obvious

reasons, however, it is impossible to be sure what the Soviet leaders thought about war, or whether the trend of their thoughts may not have been significantly altered by actions of the US government, taken perhaps because of the tenor of our estimates.

Now follow some more bad estimates, important but not as important as those just cited:

(a) In 1954 and 1955 we estimated that the Soviets would have the ICBM in 1960-61, as the earliest possible date. Lately we have changed the date to mid-1958-1959.

(b) Our estimates of current and future Soviet production of U-235 previous to NIE 11-4-56 were understated by a factor of about four.

(c) In 1954 we said that Soviet military expenditures would probably remain approximately constant through 1959. But they markedly increased.

(d) In 1956 we estimated that the Sixth Five Year Plan would be generally fulfilled. Next year the Soviets revealed that it would not.

(e) In 1955, 1956 and 1957 we greatly overestimated future production of BISON and BEAR aircraft.

(f) Production of long-range submarines of non-nuclear propulsion ceased in mid-1957, contrary to our previous estimates.

(g) We underestimated the personnel strength of Soviet armed forces in the early 1950's.

(h) We said that the Soviets would probably not make an Austrian Treaty and withdraw from the country -- but they did.

The list could be lengthened -- more examples will be found in following pages. None of the others, to my mind, compares in importance to those just cited.

The worst has now been told, and some of it is pretty bad. Yet we must now set against it some examples of what was done right.* Consider, then, the following:

* The reader must be reminded that the words "right", "correct", "accurate", and so on, when applied to our estimates, must still be taken in a provisional sense. Only in a comparatively small number of instances can we be perfectly sure that we were "right". But I am giving us the benefit of the doubt, at least in the above paragraph.

(a) The essential stability of the Soviet state, through and after the death of Stalin, was correctly foreseen.

(b) The all-important Soviet domestic policies of concentration on heavy industry and military power were always emphasized.

(c) The basic hostility of the Soviet regime to the West was always recognized, always hammered in.

(d) The dimensions of the Soviet economy, its rate of growth, its component sectors, and so on, were described with a high degree of accuracy.

(e) The Soviet armed forces were in general correctly described. There were mistakes in detail, a few of which were important, but as far as we know now the number of serious errors was remarkably small, considering the magnitude of the job done on the Soviet military.

(f) Soviet scientific and technical capabilities were well judged. The only real defect here was that the estimates -- correct as they generally were -- were seldom stated with the eloquence and emphasis they deserved. They lacked impact, which was reserved for propositions about general war, etc.

(g) Soviet policy respecting Germany was correctly estimated in every important particular.

(h) Sino-Soviet relations appear always to have been correctly estimated.

And so on. The list might be lengthened almost indefinitely. There were hundreds of judgments in these papers, and by far the greater number of them were sound. I am inclined to say that the estimates look very well indeed in spite of the three or four grave blunders that have been recorded, a nd the considerable number of lesser slips which were made.

Some Further General Observations on the Soviet Estimates

One phenomenon strikes me quite forcibly -- it is the degree to which our most important wrong estimates, all of which were in the political field, arose out of resistance to the idea that change and development would occur in the Soviet Bloc. The single greatest blunder we made was in failing to see that the death of Stalin meant the end of an era -- that the new men would be virtually compelled to act differently -- that the "objective situation" (to borrow Communist terminology) was altering.

Our papers continued for a time to have an almost Stalinist, monolithic, orthodoxy. This indisposition to recognize change had its virtues, to be sure. Suppose, for instance, we had judged that the death of Stalin would bring about an end of hostility between the USSR and the West; this would have been a far grosser and more serious error than any we made. Or suppose we had yielded to those few who thought that Malenkov would throw over the concentration on heavy industry and military development in favor of appeasing the Soviet consumer. We did well to avoid these extremes, but we would have done still better if we had steered further away from their opposites.

It would be a great mistake, however, to regard the failure of NIE's in this regard as owing to mere ignorance or stupidity in the intelligence community. The problem was old and basic -- it was that of evaluating, weighing, and describing the elements of continuity in a situation as against the elements of change. There is no more difficult problem, either in the writing of history or in the formulation of intelligence estimates. When all the embellishments of our function are cleared away, this problem remains at the center.

Everyone will probably agree that nothing short of Olympian wisdom is sufficient to evaluate properly elements of continuity versus those of change. We must struggle with the problem as best we can; occasionally we shall go wrong. There seems, however, to be a Law that operates among intelligence estimators in this connection, which we might well recognize and respect. It may be formulated in this way: when dealing with hostile nations or groups, we tend toward overestimating the elements of continuity in the situation; when considering friendly powers, we tend toward overestimating the elements of change. Probably this is attributable to prudence -- if we must err, it will be better to err in the manner indicated. It was probably better that we should dwell upon the iniquity and hostility of the Soviet Union than that we should risk bemusing the consumer with hopes of basic change, even though we would not intentionally have misled him.

Yet this sensitivity to the possibility of certain special kinds of misinterpretation by our readers led to some curiosities in the estimates. We have been anxious above all things that our papers shall not provide justification for complacency, and accordingly we sometimes belabor the Soviet Union with epithets. And, on the other hand, we have been

constrained by our nationality and status to adopt the policies and attitudes of the US as an implicit standard of reference. I would risk the observation that some of the papers, especially the earlier ones, lack objectivity. Occasionally a sentence or a paragraph here and there seems designed not so much to convey sound knowledge as to inculcate correct sentiments. Perhaps this was right and proper, but I think we should strive to avoid it.

One notable omission in our papers is now gradually being remedied -- this was the failure to discuss Soviet military policies, doctrines and strategy, or to suggest various possible implications of known developments in the Soviet armed forces. It is curious that while we held forth at length on Soviet political theory, ideology, economic doctrine, and the like, we have until recently slighted comparable aspects of the Soviet military situation. Why the 175 divisions, for example? What is the meaning of the unexpectedly high production of jet medium bombers, or the continuing high output of day rather than all-weather fighter aircraft? What is the function of the army in the totalitarian Communist state? We seem to work under a tacit assumption that Soviet military theory, in the broadest as well as in the narrowest sense, is essentially

the same as our own. Yet this cannot be altogether true. There is still a rich field here for cultivation, though it may well be that the community cannot reach agreement on what flowers shall bloom.

There are innumerable other observations that might be made and problems that might be pondered in connection with these papers. Are they too long? Who can say -- it depends on who reads them and what he requires from them, and hence there is no answer. Are they too dull? No, I do not think so. They are not written to amuse but to instruct; they are full of meat; they are coordinated; on the whole they are nowadays very well written, considering what they go through. Are they too bland? Yes, I suspect so. One is always glad to come upon a footnote of dissent, an admission that last year's paper had been wrong, a vigorous affirmation of some sort. Such things are scarce but not wholly lacking. I do not get the impression, however, of a watered down least-common-denominator of opinion in these papers. The judgments are seldom very startling, but for the most part they are remarkably clear and useful. The papers are, in short, a most impressive achievement.

One final observation, wholly personal. I participated in the production of many of these papers, and I know there were great arguments over words and phrases, and pain of spirit when we in ONE lost an engagement,

and triumph when we won. Now, on wandering again through the fields of these battles, I can scarce remember what the fighting was about, and when I do remember I can hardly ever recall why we were so excited. In about four cases out of five I believe that the outcome of the argument was immaterial -- practically any reasonable and grammatical form of expression would have done as well. The fifth case was important. Could we not think of some way to call off four out of five of our wars of coordination ?

III

THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE USSR AND THE BLOC

The USSR

During the first two years of ONE's existence only two National Estimates gave much attention to the internal political situation in the USSR. The first was that freak among papers, SE-16 (The Strength and Capabilities of Soviet Bloc Forces to Conduct Military Operations against NATO; published 12 October 1951) which was prepared "for the guidance of the United States Deputy Representative to the Standing Group, Military Committee, North Atlantic Council." The second was NIE-64, and especially the Appendices to that paper, which were published on 24 December 1952. As observed above, NIE-64 was the first of the full-fledged "annual" estimates of the Soviet situation. It devoted eight paragraphs to internal political affairs, as one of the "non-military factors affecting Bloc capabilities".

No doubt there would in any event have been an increase of concern with Soviet internal policies as the estimates after 1952 became more

voluminous. However, the death of Stalin in March, 1953, at once brought these matters into a position of high interest and importance. On 12 March 1953 there was published SE-39: "Probable Consequences of the Death of Stalin and of the Elevation of Malenkov to Leadership in the USSR." Shortly thereafter NIE-65 (June 1953) and NIE's 90 and 95 addressed themselves to the problem, though still only briefly and in general terms. With NIE 11-4-54 (14 September 1954) internal affairs were given treatment in length and detail, and subsequent "annual" Soviet papers followed the pattern.

From the point of view of US security, the principal estimative problem relating to Soviet internal affairs has been to judge the basic stability of the regime. In this regard, the estimates have had a high degree of validity. NIE-64 (Appendix) said "the Soviet regime is securely entrenched in power, and there is no apparent prospect of its control being threatened or shaken". This has been pretty much the verdict in all successive estimates, and so far as we know it has always been accurate. It is, of course, the heart of the whole problem; no other question concerning the Soviet domestic situation approaches it in importance.

The effects of Stalin's death, however, were by no means easy to judge, either before or after the event. NIE-64 (December 1952) looked

cautiously ahead, and thought that the initial transfer of power would probably proceed smoothly, but this paper did not commit itself as to what might happen in the longer run. A day or two after Stalin died SE-39 appeared, and was by no means a bad paper under the circumstances. "A struggle for power", it said, "could develop within the Soviet hierarchy at any time," but it felt that such a struggle "would probably be carried on within the Party organization and higher echelons of the bureaucracy". It conveyed the impression that even if such a struggle broke out, the Soviet regime would almost certainly survive in recognizable form. It was, of course, a very brief paper, not intended to present an exhaustive treatment.

NIE-65 appeared in June 1953, and must have disappointed readers who hoped for a definite opinion. The text of this paper is hopelessly vague -- for example, it is said that "conflict within the ruling group would be the internal development most likely to jeopardize Soviet stability during the period of this estimate; yet there is no estimate as to whether such a conflict is likely. To the excessively woolly paragraph of text, however, State, Army, and JIG contributed a useful dissent, in which they went back to the earlier judgment of SE-39. They admitted that it was impossible to estimate with confidence whether

there would be a prolonged struggle for power among the new leaders, but opined that "if such a struggle for power should develop, it would be confined to the higher echelons of the Soviet Communist Party and Government and would probably not precipitate open conflict within or between the armed forces and security police, or involve the Soviet population." They followed with a firm verdict that the stability of the regime was unlikely to be endangered by differences among the Soviet leaders.

This dissent of State, Army, and JIG subsequently became the received doctrine, and appears even today in almost the same words in the annual Soviet paper. By August of 1953 CIA appears to have recovered from its doubts, and the unanimous judgment of NIE-90 (approved 11 August) is as follows: "There is no evidence that the basic economic and military strength of the Soviet Bloc, or the authority of the Soviet regime, have been weakened by developments since the death of Stalin. We believe it unlikely that appreciable weakening in these respects will occur during the period of this estimate" (i.e. through mid-1955).

It is worth while to pause a moment over this wavering judgment of Soviet internal stability which informed our estimates between March

and August of 1953, for it presents a problem in pronouncing upon the validity of these papers. We now know that there was no serious "time of troubles" in the USSR after the death of Stalin. We still do not know, however, whether troubles were always out of the question, or whether perhaps they were only very narrowly avoided. The chance of major upheavals arising out of a struggle for power among Stalin's successors may have been great; in the first weeks of March the Soviet leaders themselves may conceivably have been close to the panic which they adjured the Soviet population to avoid. We cannot say for sure, then, that the hesitant judgment of NIE-65 did not justly reflect the actual state of affairs. We cannot be certain that the firm footnote of State, Army, and JIG was anything but a lucky guess. And still, even if a guess, it was right, and we shall have to judge that NIE-65 was more valid in its dissents than in its text.

Next in importance to the vital question of the regime's stability comes the question of the regime's domestic policies. Here again, on that aspect of the matter which is of greatest importance to US security, the NIE's furnish an excellent and unequivocal guide, for they always stated with high emphasis that the Soviet government would concentrate on the increase of Soviet military and economic power. This estimate

appears to have been amply borne out by events. It was never hedged in any way. At most times it was, perhaps, an easy estimate to make, but I recall a good deal of discussion of whether Malenkov, in his efforts to give the Soviet consumer a break, might go so far as to shift the emphasis of his economic programs away from heavy industry and military production. We might have gone wrong at that time, but we did not.

It was a far subtler and more difficult problem to estimate how the successors of Stalin would govern -- what their techniques of control would be, how far they would or could depart from the methods of Stalin, and so on. These problems were not of such immediate significance for US security as those just considered, but they were of the greatest importance in judging the future character of the Soviet state.

In the perspective of five years since Stalin's death we can see a good deal of what happened, yet even now we are far from sure enough of the course of events to judge accurately the validity of the estimates. In reading the papers over I can see nothing in them that misled the consumers. On the other hand, they did not say all that might have been said, even granting that it would have been impossible to forecast in detail the Soviet government's domestic conduct.

It seems to me that the estimates fell short in two ways. First, they did not point out that there was a problem. They directed attention emphatically to the question of who was to rule the USSR, and they had a great deal to say about the "struggle for power" that might occur. No doubt this was the main point to make. Yet there was an implicit estimate, through the papers of 1953, that whoever succeeded to power would "follow the policies of Stalin", by which one could only understand the full apparatus of terror and police authority. It might have been pointed out that in all probability no one else could rule as Stalin had. It might even have been said that Stalin's methods were obsolescent in the industrialized Soviet state, with an increasingly educated population. These things were not said until NIE 11-4-54, a year and a half after Stalin's death.

Secondly, the estimates were slower than they need have been in recognizing the evidences of change. This criticism applies only to NIE-90 and NIE-95, with their Appendices, all of which came out between August and October 1953. NIE-95 did mention that Malenkov had adjusted his economic programs to allow for greater incentives and to improve popular morale, but the impact of this was removed by a sentence (in itself quite unexceptionable) emphasizing that these adjustments would

represent no change in the basic policy of primary emphasis on heavy industry, would not be allowed to endanger political control, and would not result in any curtailment of the Bloc's military effort. I remember that there were vigorous arguments over this paragraph, and I think that one can now say that there was sufficient evidence available even at that time to permit a more sophisticated account of what was going on.

These defects were corrected to a large extent in NIE 11-4-54, and in following papers. Granting the necessity for conservatism in pronouncements having the weight of NIE's, I think that the estimates must be considered as valid in the light of the still inadequate knowledge we now have. At least, there is nothing in them which has been as yet disproved by events.

As for the question of how the machinery of government in the USSR works, and what the relations are between the principal Soviet leaders, the statements in NIE's are perforce very cautious, for the evidence has always been scanty and confusing. By and large the judgments appear remarkably sound, though they are given in general terms. NIE 11-4-54 estimated that although a collective leadership seemed to be working, significant changes might occur in the composition of the ruling group,

and one man might succeed in gaining absolute power. At the same time it estimated that fundamental agreement obtained among the Soviet leaders concerning the basic objectives of the Communist regime. A year later, according to NIE 11-3-55, ". . . we incline to the view that sooner or later the Soviet system will revert to a personal dictatorship". There has been nothing in the course of events since these things were written to show that they were wrong, and much to indicate that they were right; it is still impossible to be altogether certain of their validity.

To be sure, one can make a formidable list of happenings which were not predicted in NIE's. The downfall of Beria and of Malenkov, the rise of Khrushchev, the purge of Molotov and his companions, the fall of Zhukov -- these and other occurrences were not foreseen. Probably no one would expect them to be foreseen in NIE's, however, for the business of these papers is to set forth the broad lines of likely development. On the whole, they did so with remarkable accuracy. Judging by what we know today, the most serious criticism that can be made of the NIE's on Soviet internal policies is that they displayed some lack of imagination in assessing the likelihood of change after Stalin's death. Even so it may have been more important, from a slightly

narrow view of US security interests, to insist upon the continuity rather than upon the change to be expected in the domestic Soviet scene.

The Eastern European Satellites

Soviet policy towards the Satellites always got attention in the "annual" Soviet estimates from NIE-64 (December 1952) on. In addition, however, we have done a series of special papers on the Satellites. I do not propose to examine these in much detail, but there are a few things that ought to be said about them. Here is a list of the papers under consideration:

NIE-33: Soviet Control of the European Satellites and Their Economic and Military Contribution to Soviet Power, through Mid-1953. (Published 7 November 1951).

NIE-87: Probable Developments Within the European Satellites, through Mid-1955. (28 May 1953).

NIE 12-54: Probable Developments in the European Satellites through Mid-1956. (24 August 1954).

NIE 12-56: Probable Developments in the European Satellites through 1960. (10 January 1956).

SNIE 12-2-56: Probable Developments in East Europe and Implications for Soviet Policy. (30 October 1956).

SNIE 12-3-56: Probable Developments in Soviet-Satellite Relations. (27 November 1956).

NIE 12-57: Stability of the Soviet Satellite Structure, (19 February 1957).

NIE-33 was an excellent paper, and might well be turned back to as a model for the technical construction of an estimate. There is scarcely a superfluous word; it is direct and clear; and it deals with the matters that ought to be dealt with. NIE-87 is almost as good, and indeed is almost the same paper, there being but few changes of consequence. NIE 12-54 is considerably longer and gives some impression of verbosity. In particular, it contains a mass of economic statistics, which to my mind are not only excessive in amount but dubious in accuracy. I do not believe we knew enough about the Satellite economies to warrant such precise figures. NIE 12-56 is open to the same criticism, though it may be that our basis for statistical estimates was by that time more firmly laid.

After NIE 12-56 come two shorter special estimates relating to the Polish and Hungarian crises. With NIE 12-57 we return to an "annual" estimate, but the paper is now again much shorter; it dispenses with economic detail and concentrates on the problem of stability. The same is true of NIE 12-58, published in February 1958.

In addition to its other virtues, NIE-33 was a valid estimate, but principally because it only covered the period through mid-1953.

> Soviet control over the Satellites is virtually complete, assuring for the period of this estimate the subservience and reliability of these states and continued economic and military benefit to the USSR. (Conclusion 1)

It is worth noting that this paper identified various issues and forces "which will constitute irritation for the Kremlin in Eastern Europe". Six of these were: nationalism, traditional hatred of Russia (except in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria), a western cultural tradition, religion, territorial conflicts among the Satellites, and ethnic or religious minorities within the Satellites -- all of these were said to derive from the history of the area. Three others -- the imposition of the Soviet system, Soviet economic exploitation of the area, and the current decline of the standard of living -- were direct products of the recent changes. However,

> The Kremlin in the past has shown such skill and resolution in coping with the unrest resulting from these issues and in discovering and obliterating hostile forces that, in time of peace, none of these issues is expected to develop into more than a nuisance or an impediment upon the Communist program within the period of this estimate.

These judgments were repeated verbatim in NIE-87, (May 1953) and still they must be regarded as strictly valid, for that estimate

extended only through mid-1955. The riots of June, 1953, in East Germany were not predicted, but even they constituted no more than a pretty formidable "nuisance." Once again in NIE 12-54 the same verdict is rendered:

> The emergence of a new leadership in Moscow has not weakened Soviet control over the Satellites. This control remains virtually complete and is unlikely to diminish or to be successfully challenged from within during the period of this estimate [i.e. through mid-1956]

A repetition of the June riots in East Germany was declared to be "unlikely".

In the next estimate, however, -- NIE 11-3-55 (13 June 1955) -- we repeated ourselves once too often: "Popular resistance of an organized and active kind is unlikely to appear in any of the Satellites during the period of this estimate". The "period of this estimate" extended through 1960.

Consider now Conclusion 4 of NIE 12-56 published on 10 January 1956, just about nine months before the deluge, and covering the period through 1960:

> Despite Moscow's firm control of the Satellites, there are a number of local factors which hamper the execution of Soviet policy. In some of the Satellites factionalism has become evident in the party leadership. . . Some elements privately resent dictation by Moscow. . . There are many party members with a nationalist tinge who constitute a potential for "deviation". All the governments are still confronted with problems arising from this unpopularity with the masses. . . . We believe, however, that none of these difficulties will jeopardize either the control by Moscow-oriented Communists or the implementation of Soviet policy. *

This is probably the worst estimate we ever made on a subject of major importance; it is small comfort to know that the dissenters were even further off the beam than the majority.

It is worth asking what went wrong with our process or with our wits, and I think the answer is that we oversimplified the whole

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* As a sample of curious quibbling, or, more likely, sheer carelessness, behold the first and last sentences of this quotation. Apparently there are factors which will "hamper the execution" but not "jeopardize the implementation" of Soviet policy.

We must also note that G-2 and JIG dissented from the entire paragraph, thus: "while conceding the existence of certain ideological and administrative problems in the Satellites, [they] nevertheless believe these problems are currently of no great magnitude and are likely to diminish during the period of this estimate. They would therefore omit this conclusion."

Soviet-Satellite relationship to the point of crudity. It is true that, in the most basic sense, the estimates were valid. The USSR has retained control of the Satellites; the Bloc is still in vigorous existence. Nobody doubts that the USSR can still enforce anything it wants to enforce on the Satellite governments, unless the West were to make war to avert such a development. Nothing has happened within the Soviet empire which seriously threatens Soviet security. These are important and basic truths which the estimates emphatically set forth. But this is not all that one expects of a national estimate.

The list of things that we failed to understand (let alone to predict) is quite appalling. We did not see -- as far as can be told from the NIE's -- that the Soviets ever would have any serious problems in running their empire. We did not perceive the significance of dissensions within the leadership of the various Satellite Communist parties. For a long time (until January 1956 in fact) we did not admit that Soviet policy towards the Satellites was showing any significant signs of change or modification. We underestimated the effect of the "flexible" post-Stalin policy -- after we had discovered its existence -- on developments within the Satellites, though we did say that it contained risks for the USSR (NIE 11-4-56). Even after the events of June 1953 in

East Germany we greatly overestimated the "increasing resignation" (NIE 12-56) with which Satellite populations would accept their fate. And so on. Most of these were defects not in evaluating evidence but in understanding human affairs.

As for what we failed to predict, it is not so remarkable. Hindsight may show that there was enough evidence lying around to warrant a forecast of crises in Poland and Hungary, but it would have been no more than a stroke of luck to foresee the whole scope and outcome of the events in those two countries. The real condemnation of our work is that no reader of the estimates received the slightest intimation that serious outbreaks might occur.

It is, perhaps, some comfort to know that if our more recent estimates have been correct the Soviet leaders were just as surprised as we by the Polish and Hungarian developments. They also, we now think, underestimated the disruptive effect of their "relaxations" after Stalin's death, and also underestimated the strength and determination of opposition forces within the Satellites.

The Polish and Hungarian rebellions indeed drove us rapidly into some views of the USSR which were novel by NIE standards. Not only

did we attribute to the Soviet leaders a gross misjudgment of the Satellite situation, as mentioned above, but we also decided that they did not quite know what to do when they learned the truth. The two short SNIE's of late 1956 exhibit the Soviets (perhaps wrongly) as indecisive at the moment of crisis. These and subsequent papers emphatically assert that the problem which the Satellites present to the USSR is difficult, delicate, and even possibly insoluble. This is a far cry from the message of earlier papers. It seems to me much more valid.

Perhaps one ought to point out, by way of conclusion, that SNIE 12-2-56 (30 October 1956), written in the midst of the Hungarian upheaval, but well before the decisive Soviet military intervention, was a good job. Some parts of it -- e.g. the vacillation and confusion in the Soviet leadership -- were probably overdrawn, but on the whole it dealt with the situation admirably. As for SNIE 12-3-56 (27 November) it also stands up pretty well. In this paper, however, as in NIE 12-57, we attributed to the Soviets a greater desire to see a restoration of Stalinist elements in Poland than they have subsequently shown. Apart from this, our latest estimates of short-term Soviet policies in the Satellites seem to have been borne out by subsequent events.

IV

ECONOMIC

Introduction

NIE-3 (published 15 November 1950) contained five paragraphs on economics in its section entitled "Factors Affecting Soviet Capabilities and Intentions." The purpose of these paragraphs was merely to discuss the Soviet economy in relation to the waging of general war. In this connection the paper declared: "The Soviet Union has already largely mobilized its industry for war," and contrasted this situation with that of the West, which except for a few specialized arms, "is only beginning to mobilize its industry for war." It went on to arrive at a judgment, which now seems rather picturesque, that "from the point of view of output and stockpiles of war material, the period when the Soviet Union could assert its military strength most advantageously against the Western Powers is between now and the end of 1953."

NIE-3 was a peculiar document, not produced by the regular process. The first Soviet estimate that was so produced, NIE-25, (August, 1951)

contained nothing on economics -- it was, however a paper which limited itself to Soviet courses of action. SE-16, published 12 October 1951, presented a sizeable section on Soviet economics, including paragraphs on particular industries, on strategic industrial potential, raw materials, management and labor, and so on. For the restricted purposes of this paper (i.e. the guidance of the US Deputy Representative to the NATO Standing Group Military Committee) this was an excellent effort.

The series of economic estimates really gets under way with NIE-64, in late 1952, though the scope is still modest. Thereafter the expansion of the economics section, both in volume and in scope, is very marked, reflecting primarily the increasing size and competence of ORR but also the growing breadth and complexity of the Soviet estimates generally -- the transition from almost exclusive concentration upon the likelihood of war to a wider consideration of the Soviet scene. With the increasing research capabilities of ORR, moreover, the economic sections of the Soviet estimate began to include statistical estimates of perhaps excessive specificity. This trend reached its height in NIE 11-4-56; in the next annual estimate the statements were more general, and the economics section shorter.

Despite the statistics given it is seldom easy to test the validity of the economic estimates in detail, because the figures in one paper are frequently not comparable with those in another. Different base years are chosen; different modes of computation used; or different modes of expression. This is not necessarily bad. The estimates were not written for the convenience of a subsequent validity study. There had to be a good deal of experimentation -- of trial and error -- in searching about for the most useful means of saying what had to be said, and even of deciding what had to be said. One consequence is, however, that the following pages do not give as clear a picture of the "validity" of our economic estimates as might be expected from the nature of the subject matter.

General Nature of the Soviet Economy

The concentration of Soviet economic programs on heavy industry, on military production, and on a forced high growth rate is consistently and emphatically pointed out in all the NIE's. This is basic.

Rate of Growth of the Soviet Economy

NIE's must sometimes have confused readers as to growth rates of Soviet GNP, and from time to time they contained estimates on this subject which subsequent judgment considered invalid. Generally speaking, however, the "invalidity" amounted to only one or two percentage points, and it is hard to say whether or not this was serious. I am inclined to think that it was not. To present the record in detail, however, is next to impossible because of the non-comparability of figures. I shall therefore take an easier way out, and declare that on the whole the estimates of growth rates were valid, give or take a percentage point or two, with three exceptions:

A. All the NIE's of 1952 and 1953, with one exception, stated that the growth rate since 1948 had been from 6 to 8 percent annually. The exception was NIE 64 Part I/1 (15 December 1952), which gave it as 11 percent. Probably the latter figure was too high by one or two points -- but the former figure was decidedly too low. (See NIE 11-4-54).

B. That same NIE 64 Part I/1, however, said that the economy grew during 1952 by about 11 percent, and would continue to do so through 1953. Later estimates indicate that this projection was too high by three or four -- perhaps over five -- points.* This was a serious invalidity, corrected in June 1953 by NIE-65.

C. The third aberration worth worth mention occurred in NIE 11-4-56 (2 August 1956), when it was estimated that the current growth rate of about 7 percent would continue -- that the rate in 1961 would still exceed 6 percent. The "valid" estimate (made both in 1955 and 1957) was that the average annual rate for 1956-1962 would be somewhere between 5 percent (or a little less) and 6 percent (or a little more). The root of the invalidity in NIE 11-4-56 was its estimate that the Sixth Five Year plan could be generally fulfilled. This was proved wrong the next year, and we must judge the estimate accordingly to have been invalid.

* The fact was (as estimated in NIE 11-3-55), that growth in 1953 was at the rate of only 3.5 percent, but the reasons were special, 1953 growth was far below average, and we will therefore not hold the earlier estimate to be quite as misleading as it superficially appears to be.

Size of the Soviet Economy

This is generally stated as a proportion of Soviet GNP to US GNP, and the estimates are fairly consistent. Once again, however, NIE 64 Part I/1 and NIE 11-4-56 give the Soviets a slightly higher rating than do the estimates issued before and after those papers. The variation is not very serious.

Agriculture

It would be agreeable to report that we had drawn emphatic attention to the weaknesses in Soviet agriculture before the Soviet leaders themselves made a prime public issue of them. But we did not do so. There is a curious and apparently much-argued reference in NIE-65 (June 1953) to a "major reorganization of Soviet agriculture" (paragraph 18), but this is not relevant. Yet we never took a bright view of Soviet agriculture, and our failure to predict Khrushchev's dramatic programs ought to be regarded more as a shortcomig in political prognostication than as a defect in economic analysis.

It is hard to say how far the strictly economic analysis of Soviet agriculture in the NIE's was valid. On the w hole, the estimates from

year to year were fairly consistent. All agreed that Soviet achievement would fall far short of Soviet plans, but the figures given are seldom directly comparable from estimate to estimate. It is pretty clear, however, that in NIE 11-4-54 (September 1954) we took an excessively gloomy view, estimating a total gain in production of only 15 to 20 percent over the five-year period 1954-1959. Next year, in NIE 11-3-55, we thought the total increase over the five years 1955-1960 would be about 30 percent. And in NIE 11-4-56 the gain for 1956-1961 was put at about 25 percent; in NIE 11-4-57 for 1957-1962 at about 20 percent. These figures are not quite as erratic as they look, for variations in weather caused variations in crops for the base year, thus somewhat altering the total amount of increase to be expected over the five subsequent years. For example, there was a bumper crop in 1956, which lowered the amount of gain in production over 1956 that could be expected in 1962.

On the whole, then, I think we must judge that the estimates of Soviet agriculture were valid, but that we were initially a little more sceptical than we should have been about the efficacy of Khrushchev's policies.

Soviet Trade with the Free World

This subject was long treated in a context of "economic warfare", and as such it interested the community at an early date. NIE-22, entitled "Vulnerability of the Soviet Bloc to Economic Warfare", was published on 19 February 1951; NIE-59, on "Probable Economic Effects of a Severance of East-West Trade" came out a bit more than two years later, on 16 April 1953. It will be instructive to contemplate a few pairs of quotations from these two papers. The first two quotations are not precisely comparable, but each was the first Conclusion of its respective estimate, and set the tone for the rest of the paper.

> A program of economic warfare directed against the Bloc. . . would, if well coordinated and well enforced, seriously retard and limit the development of the Soviet bloc war potential. . . (NIE-22).

> The amount of trade still carried on between the Bloc and the West is so small in relation to the total productive capability of either side that its severance could not have a significant effect upon the general level of economic activity of either the Bloc or the West. (NIE-59).

> The effect of an economic warfare program which denied significant quantities of critical items to the Soviet economy could be expected to go substantially beyond the mere summation of the separate and direct effects. Shortages would ramify widely through the economy and one shortage would in many cases compound the effect of others. The total effect. . . would seriously retard development of the capabilities of the Soviet bloc to wage a prolonged war. . . . . (NIE-22, para. 35).

> Among the goods imported into the Bloc from the West. . . . there are certain items which are of substantial importance to current Bloc industrial and military production. . . . . If these items of import ceased to be available, bottlenecks would appear in the Bloc productive system and during a limited period of time adverse repercussions would spread through the economy. (NIE-59, para. 2).
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> . . . the Soviet Bloc would attempt to reduce the effects [of Western trade controls] by adjustments within the economy, including re-allocation of resources, the use of synthetics and substitutes, and the temporary utilization of stockpiles. There would, however, be a definite limitation on their ability to reduce the effect of controls through such internal adjustments. (NIE-22, para. 5).
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> We believe that, with the possible exceptions of natural rubber and electronic tubes and components, the Bloc would be capable of replacing concurrently, within about four years, all goods presently imported from the West. Once this had been done, the effects of a stoppage of imports would become virtually negligible. (NIE-59, para. 4).

Now it is true that the Soviet economy of 1953 was bigger and stronger by two years growth than the Soviet economy of 1951. I think, however, that the more significant change had occurred not in the Soviet economy, but in our estimate of it. If it be assumed that NIE-59 was valid, then NIE-22 must be condemned as invalid to a considerable degree. One or the other of these papers certainly misled the reader, and I am inclined to believe that the earlier paper was the culprit. We still cannot really prove this, however.

Glance now at the other side of the coin -- the Bloc "trade offensive". Away back in 1952 NIE-64 declared that the Bloc could increase its exports to the non-Communist world during 1953, and that even a slight increase would constitute an important weapon of political warfare. Part II of this estimate said: "The Bloc will increase its use of economic inducements to influence the governments and people of Asia." This was an excellent prognostication; the pity is that it was never made very emphatically in any estimate, though it was repeated in the papers of 1953. Thereafter we scarcely needed to prognosticate; we could watch and measure the expansion of Bloc trade with the non-Communist world.

The first extensive discussion of Soviet foreign trade in an "annual" Soviet estimate was in NIE 11-4-54. This paper emphasized the limits within which the Soviets would expand their foreign trade -- it calculated the probable maximum of Soviet trade with the West for the immediate future at about $1.6 billion annually. This estimate appears to have been borne out by the facts. While NIE 11-3-56 may have given the impression of a much more formidable increase it did not really make such a judgment; it dilated on the marked increase of Soviet trade with underdeveloped countries, the total amount of which nevertheless was admitted to be very small.

V

MILITARY

Introduction

To an even greater degree than the economic sections of Soviet estimates those dealing with military affairs go in for figures. We are given elaborate Tables, showing exactly the numbers of divisions of men, ship, aircraft of various types, submarines, and so on which the Soviet armed forces possess, and which they will possess for five years ahead. Each year, and sometimes oftener than each year, these Tables were revised and corrected. Manifestly the whole offers a choice target for a validity study. It is easy to find innumerable instances of changing estimates, though it is seldom possible to be positive as to which estimate is correct.

We need, then, to set up some general propositions before proceeding to a more detailed examination. First, itis obviously impossible -- save through good luck -- to make a perfectly accurate numerical estimate of anything in the Soviet armed forces, even as of the time the estimate is made, and much less for years to come. The Tables of figures are

given because they are needed -- at least they are said to be needed -- by military planners, by the Net Evaluation Sub-Committee, and by others. The intelligence community can probably make a better guess at such figures than can anybody else, but no one pretends that it is better than an educated guess, showing an order of magnitude. Any figure that turned out to be accurate within five and perhaps within ten percent would probably be so because the guess was lucky and not because it was unusually well-educated.

Therefore, we ought not to judge a numerical estimate of military strength to be invalid solely because it was changed by 10 or 15 or perhaps even a greater percentage when it was next looked at. Condemnation may be reserved instead for those estimates which (a) wobbled about from paper to paper so as to give no clear picture; or (b) wrongly* forecast the trend of Soviet military development, and so misled the consumer.

It would be intolerably tedious to present a detailed account of everything that has been estimated about the Soviet military. I have

* Wrongly, that is, to the best of our present knowledge. It is always possible that an estimate now thought wrong may turn out to have been right.

chosen various subjects, making the selection on one or another of two grounds: (a) the importance of the subject, or (b) the invalidity of the estimates. The latter principle of choice leads to a rather unfair picture of the estimates in general, against which I have already issued a warning.

Soviet Military Expenditures

In the last year or two there has been a great increase in the amount of research on Soviet military expenditures, and a considerable refinement of technique. We understand better than we used to the mysteries of ruble-dollar ratios, we have more sophisticated cost studies, and we are probably getting more sure in estimating those military expenditures which are not stated as such in the Soviet budget. It is likely that a re-study of earlier estimates by ORR would reveal much more about their validity than I attempt to do here, for I shall consider only the published papers themselves.

The record shows one lapse which must be considered serious. In 1952 and 1953 we estimated that military expenditures took about one-fifth or one-sixth of GNP and would probably continue to take at

least that proportion; this meant that they would increase by some six or eight percent each year through about 1957. In 1954, however, we said that military expenditures were only about one-seventh of GNP, that the proportion would probably decline slightly, and that the absolute amount spent by the Soviets on the military would probably stay about the same each year through 1959. The following year we had to modify this estimate, for we found that military expenditures had increased markedly in 1955 over 1954, yet we estimated that they would probably be only about 15 percent higher in 1960 than in 1955. Then in 1956 we abandoned this judgment -- estimating 37 percent more military expenditures in 1961 than in 1955. Finally, in NIE 11-4-57 we seem to have retreated a little, saying that in 1962 military expenditures would be one-fourth to one-third higher than in 1957.

The seriousness of this is obvious. Readers of NIE 11-4-54 were told that Soviet military expenditures had probably reached a plateau, and they were entitled to draw appropriate conclusions. In NIE 11-3-55 they found to their distress that this had not proved true, yet they were told that the new and higher expenditure would remain fairly steady through future years. In NIE 11-4-56 they found that it would not remain steady at all, but would ascend pretty steeply.

We must therefore judge (on the scanty basis of present knowledge) that the estimate of future Soviet military expenditures as made in 1954 was invalid, and that the estimate made in 1955 was also invalid, though to a slightly less degree.

There is one lesser lapse, which still is probably worth mention. If NIE 11-4-54 is to be believed as to years before 1954 (it was wrong as to years after), then we had been overestimating Soviet military expenditures in 1952 and 1953, as follows:

Soviet Military Expenditures in 1952 and 1953

According to NIE-64 Part I/1 and NIE-65.....1/5-1/6 of GNP;
equal to 1944 expenditures

According to NIE 11-4-54.....1/7 of GNP;
2/3 of 1944 expenditures

This is not a very serious error, save perhaps that it made its small contribution to our (probable) overestimate of the Soviet leaders' disposition toward war.

Personnel Strength of Soviet Armed Forces

Nothing appears more consistent, confident, and dependable than our estimates of the total personnel strength of Soviet armed forces.

In NIE-64, published at the end of 1952, the figure is 4,500,000; in NIE 11-4-57 five years later, it is 4,675,000. (Both figures include security forces of 400,000.) Give or take two or three hundred thousand, the estimate is virtually the same for each year. Army personnel strength remains even more constant, at 2,500,000.

The earlier estimates, however, were almost certainly wrong. In 1956 and 1957 the Soviets claimed to have demobilized some 1,800,000 troops, and ORR undertook to study the problem of Soviet military personnel strengths, using evidence of annual call-ups instead of unit order-of-battle. As a result, NIE 11-4-57 stated that Soviet military manpower "may have increased to a peak of around six million in the early 1950's, and has been reduced substantially during the past several years."

The newly used evidence does not yield conclusive results -- further study may conceivably do so. It ought also to be observed that the figures in NIE's, based on unit order-of-battle, were not intended to register annual fluctuations. Nevertheless, an error of almost 50 percent is too striking to overlook. Furthermore, it is a significant error, for such a pronounced variation in the size

of Soviet armed forces now tells us something of the contemporary Soviet political as well as military outlook -- and would have done so at the time had we detected it.

For these reasons, and assuming (what is not yet quite proved) that NIE 11-4-57 was correct in its backward look, the estimates of Soviet military personnel strengths in 1952 and probably also in 1953 must be regarded as seriously invalid.

Nuclear Weapons

/Note: A useful account of the validity of estimates on this subject would have to be classified as Restricted Data. Accordingly, the following remarks are very cursory, and relate largely to the NIE's of 1950-1954./

We may begin by contemplating a good job of estimating:

	NIE-3 (November 1950)	SE-36 March 1953)	NIE 11-4-54 (September 1954)
Possible Soviet Stockpile of Nuclear Weapons--30 to 100 KT yield--in the year 1954	235	200	240

To be sure, the "possible" stockpile had become far more complicated by the time estimates were being made of it in 1954, and no one supposed that it would consist entirely of weapons of 30-100 KT yield. Yet the general magnitude of the threat in 1954 was remarkably well projected as far back as 1950, at least if we assume that the estimate made in 1954 was substantially correct.

Two years later, however, a serious invalidity had to be confessed. "As a result of new evidence we have revised upward by a factor of about four our previous estimates of past and future Soviet production of U-235," said NIE 11-4-56.* Thus the threat was suddenly multiplied.

With respect to thermonuclear weapons: In 1952 we estimated that the Soviets would be unlikely to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1953, but that by mid-1954 there would "be the possibility of advanced research and field testing concerned with thermonuclear reaction." This possibility materialized a year early: the explosion of 12 August 1953 provided the first evidence of Soviet testing of thermonuclear reactions. On this basis we immediately estimated that

* Navy and JIG did not concur in this re-valuation.

the Soviets were capable of making weapons of up to one megaton yield (NIE-90 Appendix). In NIE 11-2-54 (February 1954) we declared that by 1957 the Soviets might possibly have a prototype weapon of more than a megaton, and a year later, in NIE 11-3-55, we boosted this very greatly, saying that by mid-1956 the USSR could have weapons of 10 megaton yield. 25X2

[redacted]

25X2 [redacted] NIE 11-4-56 accordingly said that the USSR already had a significant multimegaton weapons capability, and would have a major capability in the near future -- perhaps 75

25X2 weapons [redacted] by 1 July 1956. Thus the estimate made in 1955 was probably high in megatonnage, but in general it was valid. The estimates of 1953 and more particularly 1954 erred in putting the Soviet multimegaton capability in 1957 instead of 1956.

Except in the matter of U-235, then, our account of Soviet nuclear weapons was remarkably good. It should be observed, however, that estimates of the amount of Soviet fissionable material in stockpile specified such very wide margins of possible error, especially for years subsequent to the time of writing, that it would be hard to convict them of invalidity. If they had attempted to give such an appearance

of precision as was conveyed in most other estimates of military strengths they might not have come off as well.

One other thing deserves remark. Insofar as the estimates on Soviet nuclear weapons had to be revised, the revision was almost always upward. Clearly there was a tendency to underestimate Soviet achievements in this field. I do not believe, however, that the error can be considered so great as to have been seriously misleading.

Guided Missiles

Guided Missiles were mentioned in NIE-3, and had a paragraph in SE-10 (15 September 1951) -- "Soviet Capabilities for a Surprise Attack on the Continental United States before July, 1952." In view of the importance of this subject the paragraph is worth quoting:

> It is estimated that the USSR has V-1 type missiles with ranges of at least 100 miles which could be launched from merchant ships or submarines. Such missiles could operate at low altitudes and could have considerably better accuracy than the German operational missiles of World War II. While there is no conclusive evidence that the USSR has an atomic warhead suitable for use in a ship-launched guided missile, the construction of such a warhead is estimated to be within Soviet capabilities.

It is curious to note that this paragraph, as well as a similar one in SE-14, was included under the heading "Clandestine Attack with Weapons of Mass Destruction."

In SE-36 (5 March 1953) the subject is developed a bit further. There is still no positive information that the USSR has any guided missiles in operational status, but "it is known that the USSR has been conducting an intensive research and development program." The V-1 and V-2 type weapons of World War II are estimated to be the only ones available; this is the first time that NIE's mention the ballistic missile. There is some discussion of V-1 capabilities, but the V-2 is dismissed with the remark that it could not produce a threat against the continental US during the period of the estimate (i.e. through mid-1955).

NIE-65 (17 June 1953) estimated that the Soviets by mid-1957 could produce operational quantities of guided missiles other than the V-1 and V-2, including surface-to-air, air-to-air, and air-to surface types. (Indeed they could, and did.) The launching of V-1 type missiles from submarines is again alluded to.

NIE-90 Appendix (13 October 1953) adds to previous estimates by saying that (a) a surface-to-air missile of native design could be developed by 1955, and (b) a single stage surface-to-surface ballistic missile, powered by a 120-metric-ton thrust engine, could be near the prototype stage of production by 1955 -- this with a one-ton warhead would have a range of less than 900 nautical miles.

In 1954 the first large-scale study of the guided missile program was started; this produced NIE 11-6-54 on 5 October 1954, and some of its conclusions were communicated in other papers of that year. In December, 1955, there appeared a brief supplement and up-dating (NIE 11-12-55) and in March 1957 a completely new estimate (NIE 11-5-57). Finally, in December 1957, came NIE 11-10-57, evaluating the latest evidence on earth satellites and the ICBM.

Obviously it is impossible to pronounce with confidence upon the validity of these estimates, for we are still far too uncertain in our knowledge of what the Soviets have accomplished in the field of guided missiles. Moreover, these papers are for the most part concerned with judgments of Soviet capabilities -- of what the Soviets could do, not of what they would do. We once declared, for example, that the Soviets

could have a 1,300 mile surface-to-surface missile in 1958-1960. Nowadays we see no evidence of such a weapon, but this does not mean that the original estimate of capability was invalid. Again, we said that the Soviets could orbit an earth satellite in 1957. When the Soviets did so we were very proud of ourselves, and indeed our estimate was triumphantly proved valid. Yet we had not predicted that the Soviets would launch a satellite. Thus these papers elude the stricter kind of validity study, and it is easy to fall into a morass of quibbles. Perhaps the simplest way to deal with the subject is by a series of brief statements, as follows:

(a) Cruise-type missiles for use from submarines have been written of in NIE's ever since NIE-3 in late 1950; as far as we know, the estimates have been valid.

(b) Concerning surface-to-air missiles, the estimates in 1957 not only contain nothing contrary to estimates made in 1953-1956, but they also indicate that virtually everything the Soviets have done with this type of missile was forecast with substantial accuracy as far back as NIE 11-4-54, published in September, 1954. We still do not know, of course, that the estimates of 1957 are correct.

(c) NIE 11-7-54 said that the Soviets could "now" have a surface-to-surface bassistic missile of 350 nautical miles range. And in NIE 11-5-57 it is said that the Soviets could have had this missile since 1954; thus the earlier estimate seems to have been valid. This missile was not foreseen in 1953 and preceding estimates.

(d) In 1953 and 1954 we thought that the Soviets were developing a 500 mile missile, but in December of 1955 we decided that they were not doing so, and we have not since reversed this decision.

(e) In 1954 we estimated that the Soviets could have a 900 mile missile in 1957; in December, 1955, we thought they could have it by 1955-1956; the latest estimate is that the Soviets probably had a 700 mile missile in 1956, and extended its range to 900 miles in 1957.

(f) In September, 1954 we estimated that the Soviets could have a 1,300 mile missile in 1958-1960 (the Air Force thought in 1957); in October, 1954 the date was given as 1959, or at the "earliest possible" 1957; in December, 1955 it is 1958-1959,

with the range now extended to 1,600 miles; and in March, 1957 it is again 1959. Later, however, it began to be thought that the Soviets were not developing a missile of this range, but were content with one of 900-1,000 miles, which was in fact fired six times in 1957.

(g) The ICBM was not mentioned until NIE 11-6-54, because all the earlier papers which might have dealt with it looked no further ahead than 1959, within which period it was believed that such a missile could not be in the Soviet stockpile. (NIE 11-5-54 predicted that the Soviets could attack the continental US with cruise-type missiles launched from Soviet territory by 1959). NIE 11-6-54 estimated that the Soviets could have an ICBM ready for series production in about 1963, or at the earliest possible date in 1960; NIE 11-12-55 (December) put the date at 1960-61 and NIE 11-5-57 (March) repeated this. Then came the sputniks and other evidences of 1957, and NIE 11-10-57 moved the date forward to mid-1958 -- mid-1959 (when perhaps ten prototypes would be ready for operational use).

(h) NIE 11-12-55 (December 1955) estimated that the Soviets could orbit a "relatively uninstrumented" earth satellite by 1958.

NIE 11-5-57 (March, 1957) stated that "the USSR has the capability of orbiting, in 1957, a satellite vehicle which could acquire scientific information and data of limited military value." The Soviets did orbit two such satellites, one in October and the other in November, 1957.

The foregoing is a very much simplified account of the complexities of the missiles estimates; some may say that it is grossly oversimplified. One extremely important aspect is wholly omitted: the size and yield of warheads, which is impossible to treat adequately save under the classification of Restricted Data. I think, however, that the ordinary non-technical reader would have got out of the estimates about what is set forth above, particularly since he would probably have been impatient with qualifications. He would also have been quite unable to find out what the probable warhead yields were, unless he had a Q clearance and uncommon diligence.

Concerning validity, a few things can be said with assurance. The accuracy of the estimate respecting the earth satellite was most praiseworthy. On the other hand, the virtual two-year error in dating the ICBM (if indeed it finally proves to be an error) was unfortunate. By hindsight, it seems odd that earlier estimates should have had the ICBM

lagging so far behind the earth satellite, for most of the participants in making NIE 11-10-57 thought that the successful launching of the latter demonstrated a very considerable degree of progress towards achieving the former.

Estimates respecting the 350 mile ballistic missile were good, though they were not made before the Soviets had this weapon. Concerning the 700-900-1,000 mile missile they were better, for they forecast developments with a good deal of accuracy before the developments occurred. The prognostication of a 500 mile missile was apparently in error, as was also -- possibly -- that of the 1,300-1,600 mile weapon. Concerning air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles comment would be unprofitable, for there is too little evidence to permit any useful conclusion as to validity.

One thing is abundantly clear. The intensive intelligence collection effort on Soviet guided missiles scarcely got under way before 1955, and this was assuredly only in the nick of time. It is indeed a great pity that it did not start sooner, for we can now be fairly sure that the evidence was there, if we had had the facilities to look for it.

Finally, something ought to be said in a more general way about the guided missile estimates. If there is one thing we know now, it is that the Soviets have, and must have had for some years, a missile development program of truly formidable dimensions, constituting a profound threat to the very existence of the United States. Let us now quote from two or three estimates:

(a) "It is known that the USSR has been conducting an intensive research and development program [in guided missiles]." (SE-36, 5 March 1953; the first mention of the program.)

(b) NIE 11-2-54 (February 1954); repeats sentence from SE-36 above.

(c) NIE 11-5-54 (June 1954); "We have many indications that the USSR is devoting great effort to its program of development of guided missiles."

(d) NIE 11-6-54 (October 1954 -- the first big guided missile estimate). "We believe that the strategic requirements of the USSR would dictate a major effort in the field of guided missiles, and the evidence which we have concerning the large number of personalities and activities believed to be involved in the current Soviet missile program leads us to the conclusion that it is an extensive one. However, our evidence is insufficient to permit a more precise estimate as to the magnitude of this program." (Conclusion 1.)

(e) NIE 11-5-57 (March 1957). "We estimate that the Soviet guided missile program is extensive and enjoys a very high priority." (Conclusion 1.)

None of these statements is invalid; all of them (it seems to me) are inadequate. The program was a great deal bigger and more threatening than these words conveyed. One remembers that there was a long and painful battle over the phraseology quoted above from NIE 11-6-55; only with difficulty was it made even as strong as it is. To be sure, it is hard to condemn an NIE for failing to let its eloquence run ahead of the evidence, scanty as that evidence admittedly was. In this case, however, I think we must make such a condemnation.

It should be observed that NIE 11-12-55 (December 1955) made an effort to do better. The first two paragraphs of its conclusions are too long to quote: they did try to state with force and emphasis the increasing threat which Soviet missiles would present to the US. All the more unfortunate that the attempt was abandoned in favor of the comparatively colorless first conclusion of NIE 11-5-57 (quoted as e above).

Jet Medium Bombers

We had no evidence that these aircraft were in production until May Day, 1954, w hen the Soviets exhibited nine (possibly eleven) of them in the air show. We did have evidence, at least by June 1953,

of the advanced stages of development of the German-designed EF-150 jet medium bomber, and we thought that a prototype of such an aircraft might already have flown. And we had from the beginning of NIE's predicted that jet medium bombers would appear, and anxiously looked for them. Here is the way the predictions ran, prior to actual appearance of the aircraft:

NIE-3 (15 November 1950); forecast introduction of jet mediums in 1952. Invalid.

NIE-64, Part I (12 November 1952); says there will be "possibly a few" by mid-1953. Probably invalid.

SE-36 (5 March 1953); predicts 20/30 in mid-1954. Valid.

SE-36/1 (3 August 1953); none in 1954. Invalid.

SNIE 11-2-54 (24 February 1954); series production to begin in 1954. Valid.

Then came the May Day show of 1954. Thereafter, jet medium bombers began to appear in units, and we got on to a basis of real evidence. NIE 11-4-54 estimated that the Soviets had 40 BADGERS in mid-1954, and we may take this to be the "correct" figure.

The "validity" of our estimates of the numbers of Soviet jet medium bombers for years after 1954 can be shown by the table on page 79.

Each column gives our successive estimates of the number of these aircraft the Soviets would have in a given year. The underlined figure in each column may be taken as the "correct" figure for 1 July of that year, though its real correctness is of course doubtful, especially for years still in the future. But if we cannot say how "correct" our estimates have been, we can at least show how often we changed our minds, and by how much. Perhaps it would be safest to say that this is all the table shows. Read down each column, and you will see how consistent our estimates have been; read across each row and you will see how the future build-up looked to us when each estimate was made.

The following observations seem justified:

(a) We knew next to nothing about the BADGER until it had gone into series production, and until the Soviets chose to display it. This should be a warning to us. Nevertheless, we had no doubt that the Soviets would produce this type of bomber, and we estimated that it would eventually appear, even though we had no firm evidence to go on. This was not quite a leap in the dark, to be sure, for we had firm evidence of Soviet interest in developing the German model.

Estimates of Soviet Jet Medium Bomber Strength for the years 1955-1960 (Mid-Year Figures)

Note: blank spaces indicate that no estimate was made, not that an estimate of zero aircraft was made. All figures are of actual strength save those marked with an asterisk, which are of authorized strength.

	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
SE-36 (5 Mar 1953)	120					
SE-36/1 (3 Aug 1953)	50					
NIE-90 (13 Oct 1953)	50*					
SNIE 11-2-54 (24 Feb 1954)	"a few"		325 (31Dec)			
	May Day show - first hard evidence					
NIE 11-5-54 (7 June 1954)	120	250	400	500	600	
SNIE 11-7-54 (17 Aug 1954)			650			
NIE 11-4-54 (14 Sept 1954)	200	400	650	850	1050	
NIE 11-3-55 (17 May 1955)	200*	400	650	700	700	700
NIE 11-7-55 (23 June 1955)	200* 130			700		
NIE 11-56 (6 Mar 1956)		310 (1Jan)			700	
NIE 11-4-56 (2 Aug 1956)		475	700	700	700	700
SNIE 11-6-57 (15 Jan 1957)		585 (1 Oct)				700
NIE 11-4-57 (12 Nov 1957)			900	1150	1250	1250

(b) If our latest estimate (NIE 11-4-57) is correct, we had consistently and substantially underestimated the extent of Soviet build-up in jet medium bombers. It is too early to know that we are right about the years from 1958 on, but the evidence for 1957 is good, and shows that the Soviets have almost 30 percent more BADGERS than we had predicted in 1956, and 38 percent more than we had predicted in August, 1954. These errors are big enough to deserve notice. They were not errors in the interpretation of evidence, however, for there was not, in the nature of things, direct evidence on which to base an estimate of future Soviet build-up. The estimates were, instead, based on a set of assumptions (specified in the text), and one wonders if there was something wrong with those assumptions. The matter is too complex and too speculative to discuss here, but it may be that we had some basically mistaken ideas about the Soviet's view of their military requirements. Why are they building so many more jet medium bombers than we had thought they needed? There is no answer in NIE 11-4-57.

(c) Apart from the above-mentioned underestimate (which was not itself very calamitous) and the implications to be drawn

from it (which we certainly cannot yet prove to have been misleading), it seems to me that our estimates of Soviet jet medium bomber strength were highly creditable. The consumer was warned of the threat before it actually appeared, and was given an idea of its dimensions which was remarkably accurate. He would have been better off if he had stuck with the estimates in NIE 11-4-54 until 1957, ignoring those given him in 1955 and 1956. But he would not have been much better off. As of today, I do not see that there can be any serious complaint about our estimates, but it seems possible that we may discover, in the course of the next few years, that there were certain defects in the interpretation of them which we cannot at present be sure of.

Heavy Bombers

Soviet heavy bombers, unlike Soviet jet medium bombers, heralded their official appearance in May, 1954, with a good deal of premonitory evidence. As early as the Moscow Air Show of 1951 a single four-engined aircraft considerably larger than the TU-4 was observed in flight and was designated by allied intelligence as the Type-31. For all practical purposes this was the last that was seen of this aircraft. During the

next two or three years, however, it provided a fertile subject for disputation among Allied intelligence officers, and in this way at least it may have served Soviet purposes.

Then, in mid-1953, seven distinctive aircraft, with tails reported as being approximately five feet higher than those of the TU-4, were seen on the ground by competent observers. Again, on 30 July 1953 part of the configuration of a single new large aircraft with a swept-back vertical tail was observed at the Flight Test Institute at Ramenskoye. [redacted] failed to reveal the type of wing or power plant, and one could not even be certain that it was a heavy rather than a medium bomber.

25X1C

A jet heavy bomber (the BISON) was finally seen in the May, 1954 air show, and in the rehearsals for that show. This was considered to be a prototype, but a year later we had seen so many BISONS that we were forced to conclude that series production had begun in 1954. Meanwhile, another turbo-prop heavy bomber (the BEAR) was displayed in numbers sufficient to bring this type of aircraft back into our estimates of order of battle.

Let us now construct a table like that for jet medium bombers, showing the course of our estimates. This table will have to be slightly more elaborate, with columns for both jet and turbo-prop aircraft.

Estimates of Soviet Heavy Bomber Strength for the years 1955-1960 (Mid Year Figures, Actual Strength)

	1955		1956		1957		1958		1959		1960	
	Jet	Turbo prop	Jet	Turbo prop	Jet	Turbo prop	Jet	Turbo prof	Jet	Turbo prop	Jet	Turbo prop
SE-36 (5 Mar 53)		180										
SE-36/1 (3 Aug 53)		200										
NIE-90 (13 Oct 53)		200										
SNIE 11-2-54 (24 Feb)					a few 500 (31Dec)							
NIE 11-5-54 (7 June)	0	100	0	200	20	300	60	300	100	300		
SNIE 11-7-54 (17 Aug)					50	0						
NIE 11-4-54 (14 Sept)	0	0	0	0	50	0	150	0	250	0		
NIE 11-3-55 (17 May)	20	20	80	80	200	150	350	250	400	300	400	300
NIE 11-7-55 (23 June)	20	20					350	250				
NIE 11-56 (6 Mar)			40	35					400	300		
NIE 11-4-56 (2 Aug)			35	30	90	130	220	250	400	300	500	300
SNIE 11-6-57 (15 Jan)			40 (10ct)	35 (10ct)							500	300
NIE 11-4-57 (12 Nov)					90-150		150-250		250-450		400-600	

Amonb the many eccentricities displayed by this table, two are worth special note: (a) the complete abandonment of the Type-31 turbo-jet heavy bomber in August, 1954, after working it up to a formidable threat in the previous June, and (b) the very marked reduction of total figures in the 1957 estimate (NIE 11-4-57) as compared with those given in estimates made in 1955 and 1956.

Any experienced intelligence officer will regard the wrong estimates set forth in this table with much indulgence. He knows the paucity of evidence even as to current order-of-battle, and he knows that there can be little evidence of any value concerning order-of-battle in years to come. He knows that the Soviets themselves may well have been just as wrong in forecasting their own future strength in heavy bombers. The difficulties and probable shortcomings of these estimates were in fact explained in the text. Moreover, the appearance of heavy bombers was predicted before they were produced; the threat was anticipated. This is a creditable record.

Yet the estimates of numbers were in many cases wildly invalid. I know of no way in which they could have been made more accurately; even those referring to a future time that turned out to be correct were so probably through luck rather than through intelligence. The

ordinary consumer, unfamiliar with the nature of the problem, might be pardoned for thinking that intelligence estimates were a dubious basis on which to form his idea of Soviet power. Did we really have to be so specific?

Submarines

A table showing our estimates of total numbers of Soviet submarines would not be very useful for the purpose of this study. Instead of projecting the numbers of submarines which the Soviets would have during each of the years covered by an NIE (as was done with aircraft), numbers were generally given only for the year in which the estimate was made and for the year in which the period of the estimate terminated. Hence we cannot get as many figures as we could for aircraft. Moreover, successive figures are not wholly comparable. Obsolete or obsolescent boats were generally, but not always, left out of the reckoning, but one is not quite sure whether or not they were included in earlier estimates. Hence, some at least of the variations were not real.

Another Table, however, will show a quite striking invalidity:

Estimates of Soviet Long-Range Submarine Building per Year

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
11-4-54 (June 54)	46	46	46	46	46	46		
11-3-55 (May 55)		70	80	80	40	40	40	
11-4-56 (Aug. 56)			90	105	75	75	75	75
11-4-57 (Nov. 57)				30	0 (possibly)	-- will be resumed		

The explanation for this sad debacle is easy enough to understand. Soviet capability to build submarines was known to be much greater than even the largest figure shown. Each estimate of current building rate (underlined) was based on good evidence, and was made with much confidence. Observing how many more boats were built in 1955 and in 1956 than we had expected, we thought we could hardly do other than raise the future rate -- though each NIE explicitly stated that there was no basis for an estimate of the future Soviet submarine fleet other than inference from current rates of construction. Then in 1957 appeared clear indications that the program (of long-range boats) had been virtually terminated, and there was nothing to do but change the whole basis of estimating.

Perhaps these wrong estimates were in the nature of things unavoidable, but there is a passage in NIE 11-4-57 which suggests that they need not have gone quite so far astray. Before citing this passage, we must look at the matter of nuclear-powered submarines, concerning which our estimates can be speedily summarized. This type is first mentioned in NIE 11-5-54 (June 1954), which states that it is "possible that, by mid-1959, nuclear propulsion for submarines will have been developed by the USSR." Estimates in 1955 and 1956 continued to cite this possible development "within the period of the estimate," i.e. by 1961. Then in mid-1957 we said (NIE 11-4-57): "We estimate that a reactor could be available in 1957." So the time had come.

To return now to the promised passage from NIE 11-4-57. After saying that the program for construction of long-range boats had been curtailed, "and may possibly be terminated this year," we went on as follows:

> The Soviets will retain their capability for submarine production, however, and we believe that after an interim period for changeover and development of prototypes, series construction of new long-range types will be resumed. This procedure would be parallel to that followed in the period 1949-51 in the changeover to the "W," "Z," and "Q" classes. (Underlining added.)

Now we knew as far back as 1954 that nuclear-powered submarines would be coming in, and probably special missile-firing types as well. Should we not, then, in view of the underlined sentence quoted above, have estimated the likelihood of an "interim period for changeover" to these types before we actually found ourselves confronted by the evidence that such a period had begun? I cannot say that we should, but it would have been a brilliant stroke if we had done so.

Other Soviet Military Strengths

We may now select a few more aspects of Soviet military strength as estimated in numbers, and consider each more briefly.

Army Strength. The 175 line divisions march through all estimates from NIE-3 to NIE 11-4-57. They are generally said to average about 70 percent of full strength; only in NIE 11-4-57 is there any significant effort to distinguish between those which may be at very low strength, and those which may be at better than the 70 percent average. As observed above, total personnel strength of the army is given consistently as 2,500,000 and there is reason to believe that this was wrong for the period of the early '50's. Still, no estimate ever doubted that by

about M+10 the Soviets could have their 175 divisions in full battle array. We have no good reason to doubt it now.

Total Aircraft Strength. This also stays consistently at 18 to 20 thousand through all the estimates. Earlier papers state that the Soviets probably have another 20,000 aircraft in reserve storage; this statement was dropped about 1954.

All-weather fighter aircraft. One remembers this as a major bone of contention in late 1952 and 1953; had the Soviets developed AI radar, or not? NIE-3 predicted that all-weather interceptors, with effective GCI equipment, would appear by 1952. The fact seems to be that a few appeared in 1954, and then the numbers increased at first more rapidly, and recently more slowly, than was expected. The following short table will show how we estimated; note the extraordinary and ill-founded enthusiasm of NIE 11-3-55, stimulated by the unexpectedly large number of these aircraft that had been detected in that year.

Soviet All-weather Fighter Aircraft (Actual)

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
NIE 11-5-54 (June 1954)	20	200	500			
NIE 11-4-54 (Sept.1954)	"a few"	200	500	1000	1500	2100
NIE 11-3-55 (May 1955)		300	1000	2500	3800	4500
NIE 11-4-56 (Aug.1956)			1046	1707	2382	3316
NIE 11-4-57 (Nov.1957)				1320	2350	3300

Jet Day Fighters. Estimates on this subject were fairly consistent. The number built up to about 10,000 in 1954 and 1955, then gradually fell off as all-weather fighters were introduced. The number estimated in 1957 as currently in Soviet operational units (8640) was very close to the numbers which had been predicted for 1957 as far back as 1954.

Piston Medium Bombers. Once the jet medium appeared in 1954, our estimates began to phase out the BULLs. In 1955 we estimated that by 1959 there would be no more BULLs in Soviet Long Range Aviation,

and we remained convinced of this through 1956. In 1957, however, we saw that these aircraft were not disappearing as fast as we expected, and we reinstated them: 150 in 1959. It remains to be seen whether we were correct in doing so.

Jet Light Bombers. There seems here to have been a very creditable job done. In 1952 and 1953 we slightly underestimated the rate at which jet light bombers would appear in the immediate future, though we were better in looking two years ahead. In September 1954 we saw currently about 3250 of these aircraft in Soviet operational units, and predicted that the number would remain about the same through 1959. Since then our estimate has always been the same (3100 currently, and 3100 for future years) and thus far it appears to have been correct.

Inflight Refueling and Tanker Aircraft. Year after year and paper after paper, from SE-10 (Sept. 1951) on, we pointed out (a) that there was no evidence whatever of Soviet development of an inflight refueling capability; (b) that it must be considered within Soviet capabilities to develop this capability; and (c) that we must therefore consider the effects of inflight refueling on Soviet capabilities for attack on the US. Not until NIE 11-4-56 (August 1956) were we able to report

evidence that the Soviets were doing inflight refueling. Yet so sure were we that the Soviets must go in for it that in NIE 11-4-54, observing that the old TU-4's were to be discarded in favor of jets and turbo-props, we assigned them a tanker role, crediting the Soviets with tanker aircraft thus:

1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
300	500	550	750	850

By NIE 11-3-55 we grew more prudent, and bethought ourselves that TU-4's would not really be very useful tankers for BISONS and BADGERS. A year later (NIE 11-4-56) we estimated that the Soviets would only require something on the order of 350-400 tanker aircraft in 1960-1961. Thus NIE 11-4-54 must be considered guilty of an extraordinary aberration in the matter of tanker aircraft.

Cruisers. Through 1954 we saw cruisers building, and we estimated (NIE 11-4-54) that the Soviets would have 39 in 1959. Then in 1955 appeared evidence that the building program was drawing to a close, and we now predict only 28 in 1959 -- the same number estimated to exist at present.

Destroyers. Changes in the classification of these ships make it impossible to compare the figures properly. The Office of Naval Intelligence might be able to show that its estimates had actually been consistent and valid, within reasonable expectation. But the impression given is not one of consistency, though only once (NIE 11-56, March 1956) is there what appears to be a clear overestimate. Apart from this instance, the order of magnitude of the Soviet destroyer fleet is probably adequately conveyed, but one is hard put to understand exactly how many destroyers, and of what kinds, were being predicted in the earlier papers, or how those predictions ought to be compared with the estimates in later papers.

Soviet Military Capabilities

We have not had the privilege of observing a war between the USSR and the US, and we are consequently not in a position to judge with confidence the validity of our estimates of Soviet military capabilities. However, during the past seven years we have not had occasion to change these estimates in any significent way, except as they were modified in consequence of the continuing modernization and training of the Soviet armed forces. Accordingly, it seems necessary

to concede that the estimates were valid, within one of the narrower meanings of validity adopted for the purposes of this paper.

We might let the matter drop right there. However, I think that a few general observations are worth making, obvious though they may be. The paragraphs on Soviet military capabilities in the "annual" Soviet estimates are not impressive, and I think there are two reasons for this: first because they did not contain enough detail or analysis, and second (more important) because they contained gross and not net estimates.

By and large, the earlier papers contented themselves with somewhat portentous statements of the obvious. After all, if we had been told in one paragraph (labelled "strengths") that the Soviets had so many combat-ready divisions, we were really not much the wiser for being told in another paragraph (labelled "capabilities") that these divisions could launch an attack. We gave the Soviets some 1100 TU-4's, and judged that their combat range was about 3100 nautical miles. It hardly needed a special paragraph to explain that this force could undertake attacks in many directions at once; or to deduce laboriously that, unless refuelled, they could only attack the continental US on

one-way missions. There is far too much of this kind of thing in the earlier papers, and indeed in more recent ones as well.

Occasionally some passing phrase does enlighten -- as when it is said that the 25 or 30 Soviet divisions in Germany could attack "without warning." In NIE 11-4-54 there is quite an illuminating paragraph on Soviet airborne capabilities against Western Europe, and another on the length of time that Soviet troops in East Asia could fight with the supplies available in that theatre. From 1954 on there is more of this sort of thing.

The moral seems to be that any analysis of military capabilities must be fairly detailed if it is to be useful. And since there was only so much space in our general Soviet papers, and an almost infinite number of Soviet military capabilities, we were apt to fall back on empty generalities. On the other hand, we did undertake an impressive series of estimates on Soviet capabilities to attack the continental US, and these were useful because the subject was studied in detail. Sometimes, also, we have given attention to Soviet capabilities for military action in particular areas (Syria, Suez) and these studies have been fruitful. But we still have quite a way to go if we are to avoid boring the reader with platitudes in the paragraphs on military capabilities in the general Soviet papers.

I think it also worth remarking that the most arresting statements on the subject often related to what the Soviets could not do, rather than to what they could do.

Then there is the matter of gross versus net capabilities, on which a whole treatise might be written. The intelligence community, guided by its military members, has looked upon itself as the equivalent of a divisional or army G-2, and has forbidden itself to make net estimates on the ground that such judgments are the "commander's" business. Surely, however, it would be more proper to consider that a "commander's" estimate of the net military situation should rightfully constitute one element in a "national" intelligence estimate of the total situation. We will not argue it further here, but it has astonished me greatly to discover that despite all restrictions of military intelligence doctrine the primitive old NIE-3, of November 1950, is full of net estimates. Here are two examples:

> ". . .The North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries are not at present capable of preventing the overrunning of Western Europe, excluding the United Kingdom". (para. 22)
>
> "It is accepted that it will be found possible progressively to build up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in Europe so that, by 1954, they will be capable of withstanding the initial shock of such a surprise attack." (para. 23).

It is clear from the context that the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces" include those of the United States. If this sort of estimate was allowed in 1950, why should it be forbidden in 1958?

Some Judgments From NIE-3

As a matter of antiquarian interest some of the verdicts in NIE-3 are worth resurrecting. The problem set in this paper included one aspect which we have not since had to deal with: "To estimate Soviet capabilities and intentions with particular reference to the date at which the USSR might be prepared to engage in a general war". The estimators sensibly decided that the Soviet rulers "may deliberately provoke such a /general/ war at the time when, in their opinion, the relative strength of the USSR is at its maximum", and they asked themselves when this time would be. The answers now strike us as curious:

> "As regards other /i.e. non-atomic/ items of scientific development it is considered that the Soviet rulers would probably be willing to assume the risk of a major war at any time after the end of 1950."
>
> "From purely an army viewpoint, if the Soviet rulers are willing to initiate, to provoke, or to accept the risk of a general war, it would be in their best interests to do so at some time between now /i.e. November, 1950/ and 1954, with the optimum date probably being about the middle of the period."

> "It is expected that Soviet air capabilities will be improved steadily and probably reach optimum relative to the Western Powers in 1952".

And in Summary:

> "It is estimated that /the relative strength of the USSR will be at its maximum/ from now through 1954, with the peak of Soviet strength relative to the Western Powers being reached about 1952".

We should resist any temptation to jeer at these quotations. NIE-3 did not say that the Soviets would make general war by 1954; it did not say that the USSR would be militarily stronger than the US in 1952; it did not say that if we struggled through to 1954 without destruction all would then be well. It merely attempted, during the early stages of the Korean War and the NATO build-up, to estimate when the moment of greatest danger might be in the years lying immediately ahead. It thus made a praiseworthy effort at a "net" or "comparative" estimate. Nowadays we do not even try to do this.

I see no reason to doubt that the statements quoted were valid. Indeed, their validity (in one sense of the word) is upheld by a passage in NIE-95 (September 1953), which runs as follows:

Bloc leaders probably realize that the Western system of alliances and the West's rearmament since 1950 have greatly increased the risk that new local aggressions will be met by Western military opposition. They probably estimate that there is practically no area of the world where Bloc forces could initiate overt military agression without grave risk of Western military reaction which might lead to general war . . . We therefore believe it unlikely that the Bloc will deliberately initiate new local aggressions with identifiable Bloc armed forces during the period of this estimate. . . . /i.e. two years/

VI

SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION

Soviet Objectives

Some aspiring theorist in the intelligence community ought to put his mind to the subject of "objectives" and turn out an article for the professional journal. For it is clear that this subject is basic to the intelligence process insofar as that process relates to the estimating of probable enemy courses of action, and it is fairly evident from a reading of our Soviet papers that we are sometimes careless and glib in dealing with it. Before coming to the content of the NIE's in this regard, I should like to mention one or two of the problems that suggest themselves, and are illustrated in the paragraphs which will follows.

How sound is the method? In the military field everything is fairly clear-cut. Commanders are assigned an objective, which is usually carefully formulated, and the actions they take are directed exclusively to the achievement of that objective. If enemy intelligence

can gain knowledge of the objective that has been assigned it will have gone a long way toward explaining the actions the commander takes, and forecasting those he will take.

But is everything quite that simple in grand national policy? Surely there is at least a confusion and incompatibility among various objectives -- probably often also an indefiniteness and imprecision of formulation, so that the aim in view is not perfectly and unanimously understood by all who pursue it. And there may perhaps be something even more difficult to deal with: a factor of irrationality and impulse, producing courses of action quite unrelated to any explicit national aim.

Basic, Ultimate, and Immediate Objectives. Everybody agrees that national objectives exist in hierarchies, or echelons, ranging from the lesser to the greater. In theory at least, the lesser subserve the greater -- achievement of the smaller aim marks a step, or clears the way, toward achievement of the next in line, and so on to the ultimate peak of accomplishment. But in writing national estimates where do we dig into this pyramid of aims and bring out something worth setting down? If we strike too near the top we are likely to come upon something

which the Soviets do not expect to work on until the distant future; if too near the base we may have something so detailed, or small-scale, that it will not be worth putting in a national estimate even though the Soviets are currently pursuing it.

The Chicken and the Egg. Do we deduce policies from objectives, or objectives from policies? The answer is obviously that we do both, but perhaps not always with full critical recognition that we are doing so.

The example of NIE-3

NIE-3 does the neatest job on Soviet objectives. The paper begins with the "ultimate objective" of the Soviet rulers: "to establish a Communist world controlled by themselves or their successors." Then come "their immediate concerns, all consistent with that objective", as follows:

a. To maintain the control of the Kremlin over the peoples of the Soviet Union.

b. To strengthen the economic and military position and defend the territory of the Soviet Union.

c. To consolidate control over the European and Asian Satellites (including Communist China).

d. To make secure the strategic approaches to the Soviet Union, and to prevent the establishment, in Europe and Asia, of forces capable of threatening the Soviet position.

e. To eliminate US influence in Europe and Asia.

f. To establish Soviet domination over Europe and Asia.

g. To weaken and disintegrate the non-Soviet world generally, especially to undermine the power and influence of the US.

Then we are told that the Soviet Union will try to pursue all these immediate objectives simultaneously, but in case of conflict between them "it may be expected that the Soviet rulers will attach greater importance to the first four listed, and in that order."

And then: "Inasmuch as the Soviet ultimate objective is immutable and dynamic, the Soviet Union will continue relentlessly its aggressive pressures on the non-Soviet world . . . Consequently there is, and will continue to be, grave danger of war. . ." The argument proceeds, with virtually impeccable logic, to the body of the estimate, though the conclusion is a little disappointing: "Intelligence is lacking to permit a valid prediction as to whether or when the USSR would actually resort deliberately to a general war."

Another technique worth pondering is used in NIE-3. In examining "Courses open to the Soviet Union" the whole world is surveyed, region by region and sometimes country by country. The text first sets forth the Soviet "concern", or the Soviet "objective", with respect to each area, then examines possible means of accomplishing the aim, then estimates what the Soviets will probably do. This procedure certainly has its good points, though the judgments reached are not always as clear-cut as one would expect from the rigorous method. 25X1C

Now NIE-3 was "an editorial adaptation of [redacted] and thus was actually a military document. As remarked above, the matter of objectives is comparatively simple and clear-cut in military affairs, and perhaps this is the reason that NIE-3 possesses such a beautifully articulated design. But let there be one doubt cast upon the correctness of its statement of Soviet aims, and the whole edifice begins to collapse. ONE did cast doubts. Never again do we have such an excellently logical paper on Soviet courses of action. And never again do we have a paper which exhibits the full potentialities of using a statement of objectives to forecast Soviet conduct.

NIE-25

NIE-25 (2 August 1951) is the first general paper on Soviet courses of action produced in ONE. It covered only the period to 1952. Like NIE-3 it began with a section on Soviet objectives. First: "We believe that the ultimate Soviet objective is a Communist world dominated by the USSR. . ." Next: "The principal immediate Soviet objectives evidently are:

a. To divide the West;
b. To prevent Western, West Germany, and Japanese rearmament;
c. To prevent implementation of the US overseas-bases policy.

But the drafters seem to have felt that there was more to be said and so they went on: "We believe the USSR, in the pursuit of its objectives, will during the period of this estimate:

a. Seek to maintain an advanced state of war readiness. . ;
b. Seek to prevent the development of any threat to the vital interests of the USSR. . . ."

and so on through c, d, and e. Here obviously are five additional objectives apparently neither ultimate nor immediate. What then are they? The question is unimportant, save that it brings out the inherent

difficulties in listing national objectives under such categories. The authors of NIE-25 were somewhat at a loss to know just which of the innumerable possible and probable Soviet aims they ought to put in their introductory paragraphs. Which were important enough -- which were to be determinative of Soviet action?

There is one other paragraph in NIE-25 that points a moral about estimating Soviet objectives. "The Kremlin," says paragraph 21, "probably aims to secure control of Greece and Turkey. . . ." However, the paragraph goes on to say that the Kremlin can achieve this aim only by attacking those countries with Soviet forces, that such an attack in the view of the Kremlin would lead to general war, and that "an attack on Greece or Turkey is therefore unlikely during the period of this estimate." In other words, the Kremlin was unlikely to do what it would have to do to secure control of Greece and Turkey. Now if this was true, of what profit was it to say that the Kremlin probably aimed to secure such control? We ought to be concerned only with those evil Muscovite thoughts that lead to action.

The Remaining Papers

It will be sufficient to make only a few observations about the statements of objectives in subsequent Soviet estimates. The ultimate objective began to be watered down a little:

> "their basic objective. . . continues to be an expansion of their own sphere of powers and the eventual domination of the non-Communist world" (NIE-95)
>
> ". . .The consolidation and expansion of their own power, internally and externally" (NIE 11-4-54)

It should be observed that this development was not owing to our belief that the Soviets had changed their minds about world domination, but to our conviction that such an aim was too remote to exert much direct influence on the shaping of Soviet policy from day to day.

The list of immediate objectives settled down into something fairly standardized, and may be illustrated from NIE 11-4-56, where, however, it bears the designation "general objectives":

a. To increase the economic strength and military capabilities of the Sino-Soviet Bloc;
b. To weaken the cohesion of the non-Communist world, and particularly to disrupt NATO;
c. To cause a retraction of Western power and influence, and particularly to force withdrawal of US military power from its present deployment around the periphery of the Bloc;
d. To expand Soviet influence throughout the world by political, economic, and subversive means.

This is a pretty well-formulated statement. The list was nearly as good in previous papers but was damaged by the inclusion of additional items of too great specificity, e.g. "to expand the area of Communist

control in Southeast Asia" (NIE 11-4-54), or "to detach Japan from the sphere of Western influence. . ." (NIE 11-3-55). In the latest paper -- NIE 11-4-57 -- the list contained only three items, which were described as "limited" objectives, though one of them was the same as (c) above.

Finally, each paper contained additional statements of Soviet aims in various areas of the world; e.g. "We estimate that in Western Europe the Kremlin will give priority to attempting to prevent or delay unification and rearmament," or "the expulsion of the Western Powers from Berlin will remain a basic Soviet objective" (both from NIE-64).

Validity of the Estimates of Soviet Objectives

It is impossible to say much that is useful about the validity of these statements of Soviet objectives, primarily because we still have no way of being certain about what is or was in Soviet minds, but also because our theory, nomenclature, and definitions of terms are so confused. Consider, for example, the statement quoted from NIE 11-3-55 that a "principal objective" of the USSR between 1956

and 1960 would be "to detach Japan from the sphere of Western influence and encourage its closer association with the Sino-Soviet Bloc." This statement did not appear in NIE 11-4-56 as a "principal" objective, though it was repeated as a Soviet objective in Asia, and in NIE 11-4-57 it was thinned down to read: "encouraging Japan to assume a more independent attitude at the expense of its ties with the US." Does this mean that the statement in NIE 11-3-55 was invalid? Probably not, though it may have been phrased too strongly.

Again, what about Berlin? According to NIE-64 the expulsion of the Western Powers from Berlin "will remain a basic Soviet objective", yet I do not recall that the Soviets have done anything very remarkable in pursuit of this "basic" objective. Was it really basic, then, and if so in what sense? Compare this with our formulations of Soviet objectives in the Middle East. These statements are far from precise or emphatic but insofar as they existed at all they indicated (up to and including NIE 11-3-55) that the Soviets would continue to be somewhat indolently concerned to hinder the development of Middle East defense plans. Scarcely was NIE 11-3-55 in print when Soviet policy in this area took on a new look.

Broadly speaking the difficulty is this: Almost any disagreeable purpose can be attributed to the Soviets without much fear of contradiction, and if this is all we mean by statements of objective then we have probably struck a high level of validity. But if an objective means (as I think it ought) an end or aim which is determinative of action, then our record is not quite as good. We have tended to credit the Soviets with divers evil aspirations, and to be content. But this is a fault of theory, not a defect in estimating. I repeat what I began by saying: that we could do with a rigorous examination of the whole problem of judging and describing Soviet objectives.

Soviet Policies in General: The Likelihood of War

The climate of opinion in the intelligence community at the time that ONE began its operations is well conveyed by the following paragraphs from NIE-11; "Soviet Intentions in the Current Situation", published on 5 December 1950. The whole estimate, incidentally, was barely over one printed page long:

> The Soviet rulers have resolved to pursue aggressively their world-wide attack on the power position of the United States and its allies regardless of the possibility that

> global war may result, although they may estimate that the Western Allies would seek to avoid such a development. Further direct or indirect Soviet aggression in Europe and Asia is likely, regardless of the outcome of the Korean situation. . .
>
> The possibility cannot be disregarded that the USSR may already have decided to precipitate global war in circumstances most advantageous to itself through the development of general war in Asia. . .

Six days later, NIE-15; "Probable Soviet Moves to Exploit the Present Situation," examined in slightly more detail various critical points in the world. It found an unusual note of urgency and a definite element of threat in the current Soviet campaign respecting Germany, and declared that the trend suggested "a renewal of the Berlin blockade, 'revolution' in Berlin, and attempted violence in West Germany." It said that "an intensification of Communist efforts to secure Indochina is to be expected, regardless of developments elsewhere", and it predicted that Chinese Communist "volunteers" would be introduced into that conflict if lesser measures proved unsuccessful. Pressures on Yugoslavia, however, had not notably increased, and "present indications do not point at an imminent Soviet intention to launch either a Satellite or Soviet-Satellite attack on Yugoslavia." Nevertheless the possibility

of such an attack (said the estimate) cannot be disregarded. And, "the Soviet Union probably will not invade Iran unless it intends deliberately to initiate a general war." Finally,

> "...The overall situation is such that the possibility cannot be disregarded that the USSR has already made a decision for general war and is in process of taking steps preliminary to its inception. We are unable, on the basis of present intelligence, to determine the probability of such a decision having in fact been made"

Both these estimates were obviously short and quick jobs. Let us now look at two others on the subject: NIE-3 (November 1950), which preceded the two just cited, and NIE-25 (August 1951) which followed them. Both the latter papers were longer deliberated, and contained more argument about the whys and wherefores of the likelihood of war, though both reached the same uncertain conclusion. It is interesting to compare their respective approaches to the problem. With a little justifiable simplification the arguments may be rendered this way: NIE-3 judged (a) that the Soviets would not modify their policy of aggression; (b) that they could not achieve any of their major aggressive objectives without general war; (c) and yet that "intelligence is lacking to permit a valid prediction as to whether or when the USSR

would actually resort deliberately to a general war." NIE-25 judged (a) that the Soviets would prefer to achieve their objectives without general war; (b) that the Kremlin might consider its chances of making progress towards its objectives without general war as good; (c) and yet that existing intelligence did not enable an estimate that general war initiated by the Kremlin was unlikely.* To put it even more succintly, NIE-3 argued that the USSR must fight a general war but might not do so, and NIE-25 argued that the USSR neither wanted nor needed to initiate a general war, and yet might do so. It is clear that neither group of estimators had much confidence in their own logic, and I am inclined to believe that they were properly prudent in this respect.

What we thought about the general nature of Soviet policies is emphatically conveyed by the tone as well as by the words of these early papers. It seems to me highly unlikely that historians will depict the Soviet attitudes of those months quite as luridly as we did, but it is still too soon to pronounce the estimates invalid. Who can say, for instance, that Stalin did not change his mind and

* To this the Navy dissented, saying, "We believe it unlikely that the USSR will deliberately choose to precipitate.....general war during the period covered by this estimate."

modify his intentions after the US intenvention in Korea? If he did, the estimates give no hint of it; indeed it is strange that they should not even mention the possibility that the USSR was in the process of learning an unpleasant lesson about the response of the US to military aggression.

Another odd thing about these papers is their clear implication that the Soviets believed themselves militarily stronger than the West. This implication permeates NIE-3, and is justified by the weak state of defenses in Europe and the comparatively parlous condition of US armed forces at the time. NIE-15 was quite explicit:

> USSR-Satellite treatment of Korean developments indicates that they assess their current military and political position as one of great strength in comparison with that of the West, and that they propose to exploit the apparent conviction of the West of its own present weakness.

Yet we had atomic weapons, and the means to deliver them, and the Soviets did not, in any quantity. Our deterrent may have been primitive by present standards, but it was none the less formidable. I do not believe that the Soviets thought their position one of "great strength" in comparison to that of the West -- but perhaps they did.

All of the finer points of analysis of Soviet courses of action were subsumed, during 1951, in our understandable obsession with the prospect of general war. It was hardly necessary to declare that the USSR was basically hostile to us, when the papers deomonstrated so abundantly our conviction of this hostility. Nevertheless, NIE-25 went even a little further, postulating "a Kremlin conviction that peaceful coexistence of the USSR and its empire on the one hand, and the US and its allies on the other, is impossible and that an armed conflict between them is eventually inevitable." This has been contrary to official Soviet doctrine at least since the XXth Party Congress, though it may have been orthodox in the days when NIE-25 was written.

Apart from NIE-25 our estimates have contented themselves with declaring that the Soviet leaders view the world in terms of an unremitting and irreconcilable conflict between themselves as the protagonists of Communism and the Western countries led by the US. By the time of NIE-95 (September 1953) we were saying that the Soviets did not look upon the form of this struggle as necessarily military, but we have continued to the present day to emphasize the existence of permanent conflict. I see no reason to suppose that this is an invalid estimate,

but it ought to be recognized as the most fundamental single judgment of the whole series of papers. If it ever proves to have been wrong we should indeed have lived much worse than in vain.

Turning back now to the likelihood of general war, we come to a watershed of opinion in NIE-48, published 8 January 1952, and entitled "Likelihood of the Deliberate Initiation of Full-Scale War by the USSR against the US and its Western Allies prior to the end of 1952". The verdict here was as follows: "On balance we believe it unlikely that the Kremlin will deliberately initiate general war during 1952." (Italics in original). No one can read this short paper, however, without perceiving that the judgment w as painfully arrived at. There are many qualifications, cautions, and explanations of why one should take no real comfort from the estimate. There is evidence of great trouble and wrestling of spirit within the intelligence community. Yet the estimate was a landmark, and the conclusion deserves to be quoted in full:

> On balance we believe it unlikely that the Kremlin will deliberately initiate general war during 1952. We believe that the Kremlin prefers to pursue its objectives through methods short of deliberate resort to war with the US and its allies, and moreover, probably estimates that possibilities for progress

through such methods will continue to exist through 1952. We believe that in these circumstances the Kremlin is likely to be deterred from a deliberate resort to war with the US and its allies in 1952, by the certainty of extensive destruction in the USSR as well as by the risk that the Soviet system might be destroyed.

We recognize, however, the continuing grave danger of a general war in 1952 resulting from a Kremlin action or series of actions not intended to have that result, or even from actions which, in the Kremlin's view, entailed that risk, but not the certainty thereof. We recognize also the danger that general war might arise from Soviet-initiated hostilities which the Kremlin intended to limit to a particular area.

NIE-64 (Part II) (December 1952) was a little more confident in reaching the same basic verdict, but not much more. It went further, however, and declared it also unlikely that the USSR would run any "grave" risk of general war. NIE-95 (September 1953) cut the adjective down to "substantial"; and NIE 11-4-56 used the word "serious".

With respect to more general aspects of Soviet policy, the early estimates did not draw a wholly rigid and monolithic picture of Soviet policies. Consider, for example, this long paragraph from NIE-25, a paper which on the whole gives an impression that the entire Western world is about to be consumed by fire and sword:

> The Kremlin may consider the prospects of success by political warfare sufficiently favorable to make other courses of action unnecessary. For example, with the immediate objective of dividing the Western Powers, undermining US mobilization, obstructing the NATO program and frustrating prospective German and Japanese rearmament and with the ultimate objective of paralyzing opposition to Communism, the Kremlin may fraudulently propose peaceful coexistence of the two systems and may encourage the West to hope for a settlement of outstanding issues by mutual agreement. In the vital area of Western Europe the Kremlin will almost certainly continue to press its "peace" campaign, to exploit the fear of war, to intimidate by display of force, to raise hopes of German unification, and to use the Communist Parties of France and Italy in an attempt to confound the political situation and obstruct effective government. Wherever elsewhere in the world non-Communist governments are weak, as in Iran, Indochina, and Burma, the Kremlin will almost certainly seek to strengthen the Communist position and, if favorable situations develop, will support Communist coups.

This was not a bad estimate, though it is introduced only by "The Kremlin may ....," and hence is not very firm or confident. But it does attribute to the Soviets the capacity for a certain flexibility. It is interesting to observe how we preserved our virtue by inserting the word "fraudulently" in the middle of the paragraph.

The early papers do indeed depict the Soviet Union under Stalin as not only basically hostile but also unremittingly predatory -- plotting and scheming nefarious deeds twenty-four hours out of every day, interested in nothing but the ruination of the whole non-Communist

world, by methods as disagreeable as we could dream up. This probably was not altogether a false picture, but it was unbalanced. Even in the days of Stalin the Soviets found a good deal to occupy them within the boundaries of their own country. As our estimates got longer, covering Soviet economics, science, and domestic political affairs, the picture they presented almost certainly became more accurate simply because it was more complete. Yet we must remember that the earlier papers did not attempt to give a complete picture, but only to discuss the nature and dimensions of the immediate threat to US security. Hindsight suggests that they may have conveyed too alarmist an impression, but it is quite impossible as yet to declare that they were invalid.

Nowadays we consider that there was a real shift in Soviet policies after the death of Stalin -- the word we overwork to describe the new course is "flexibility." But the estimates were extremely slow in recognizing this change, and they certainly did not forecast it, unless the above quotation from NIE-25 can be said to do so. Immediately after Stalin died we delivered ourselves of the following, in SE-39:

> "In the near future, the new Soviet leadership will almost certainly pursue the foreign and domestic policies established during recent years. In particular, it will probably continue to emphasize unremitting hostility to the West. . . It would be unsafe to assume that the new Soviet regime will have Stalin's skill in avoiding general war. . . ." And so on.

This is contrary to what we now believe the new Soviet leadership thought about things; we have said that it considered Stalin's "rigid" policies to be unrewarding and dangerous.

About a month later the intelligence community showed signs of puzzlement. The Soviet animal was not behaving quite as he was supposed to behave. SE-42, published on 24 April 1953, started off by saying that since the death of Stalin there had been so many statements and gestures by the Soviet and Chinese Communist leaders as to make estimates quickly outdated. Then it came to the following conclusion, quite astonishing for an NIE of those days:

> Recent statements and actions of the Soviet and Chinese Communist government demonstrate that the Communists have adopted, at least for the moment, a conciliatory posture in their dealings with the West.

Next came a paragraph which can hardly be said to sound a clarion note of guidance:

> There have also been developments within the USSR which may prove to be of profound significance for Soviet foreign policy. We are unable as yet to estimate the meaning of these developments. It may be that..... It is also possible, however, that. . . . If the latter is the case. . .So far, however. . . . . .

The estimate ended on firm and familiar ground:

> . . .There is no basis for concluding that the fundamental hostility of the Kremlin toward the West has abated, that the ultimate objectives of the Soviet rulers have changed, or that the menace of Communism to the free world has diminished.

The next pronouncement is in September, 1953, in NIE-95. In my judgment (and this is emphatically a matter of individual judgment) NIE-95 was a bad estimate, although I cannot say that it was invalid. It started with Communist world domination in paragraph 1. Paragraph 2 began as follows:

> It appears unlikely that the Kremlin will, during the period of this estimate, consider the Bloc's capabilities relative to those of the West as sufficient to warrant deliberate initiation of general war.

This was doubtless quite true, but we can see by hindsight that it was somewhat irrelevant. We ought to have been talking about trade and aid offensives, negotiations, a "new look" in Soviet policy. The criticism is not that we dealt with general war -- for certainly it was still a most important part of our business -- but that we put it into paragraphs 2 and 3, and that we used the words we did, and that we left the impression that the Soviets also were obsessed with the idea of general war.

A few more excerpts will show how we described the nature of Soviet policies after the death of Stalin:

> At present the Kremlin seems to be trying to give the impression that it has adopted a more conciliatory policy than it followed in Stalin's later years. (NIE-95)
>
> We believe, however, that the Bloc leaders will be extremely cautious in pursuing conciliatory tactics, and may revert from time to time to demonstrations of toughness. (NIE-95)
>
> For the time being, the Kremlin seems to feel that its foreign objectives will be best served by a generally conciliatory pose in foreign relations, by gestures of "peaceful co-existence", and proposals for mutual security pacts, by tempting proffers of trade, and by playing on the themes of peace and disarmament. (NIE 11-4-54)

> We believe that Soviet diplomacy during the period of this estimate. . .will almost certainly continue to combine moves intended to ease international tensions with other moves which increase such tensions. . . .It is possible, however, that the Soviet leaders also desire a substantial and prolonged reduction in international tensions. . . . (NIE 11-3-55)
>
> The three years since the death of Stalin have seen much change on the Soviet scene. The men who succeeded him have adopted external policies which they deem to be better calculated to advance Soviet world interests.. . This development has reflected their awareness of a changing world situation. . .It is not yet clear where this new Soviet flexibility will ultimately lead, but the fact of its emergence has become evident. (NIE 11—4-56)

The "fact" certainly took a long time to become "evident" to the intelligence community. The earlier estimates were not invalid; the passages quoted correctly describe, on the whole, what was happening and what was going to happen. Yet I believe that these estimates were misleading, in respect to the general subject of Soviet policy, because they implied that Stalin's conduct and policy were normal to the USSR, and that any modification of Stalinism could be no more than a brief and transient phase of Soviet "posture." In short they failed to see that Stalin's death marked the end of an era, and they largely failed to set forth the real dangers of the years to come. I think that this must be considered as one of the two or three major failures of our intelligence

estimates, though it is virtually impossible to say that any relevant statement in any of the NIE's considered was "invalid."

As an illustration of this major theme, consider the fashion in which we dealt with Soviet "concessions."

> We believe that during the period of this estimate the rulers of the USSR will offer no real concessions. . . NIE-64 (Part II), 11 December 1952
>
> If the West should suggest re-examination of the principal issues which have divided East and West, the new government would probably adhere to established Soviet positions. (SE-39, 12 March 1953)
>
> The Bloc's intentions at present -- to make no major concessions, settle no major issues, and to promote division in the Western alliance. (NIE-95, September 1953)
>
> We believe that the USSR during the period of this estimate will almost certainly be unwilling to settle any East-West differences at the cost of major concessions. . .(NIE 11-3-55)

Meanwhile, however, the Soviets had made the Austrian Treaty, which we had said in NIE-95 they would not do, and we greeted this ungraciously:

> The terms which the USSR has accepted in the Austrian treaty involve important concessions as compared with positions previously held, and while there are a number of compensating factors which probably reduce the scope and significance of these concessions from the Soviet point of view, they do not adequately explain Soviet motives in seeking a treaty at this time. . .We believe that the reversal of policy on Austria is intended to convey the impression that the USSR has receded from the rigidity of its former positions. . .etc., etc. (NIE 11-8-55, 19 May 1955 underlining added)

And NIE 11-3-55, already quoted as to the future, had this to say about the past, contemplating the Austrain treaty, the Japanese treaty, the Yugoslav "trip to Canossa", the disarmament talks:

> /The USSR/ has made important concessions, though no apparent important sacrifices as yet.

With this kind of miserable quibble over the difference between a "major" and an "important" concession, and between a "concession" and a "sacrifice", and with the sorry phrase "to convey the impression that the USSR has receded from the rigidity of its former positions" (when the fact was obvious to everyone that it had receded), we blinded ourselves to the actualities of Soviet conduct. We had constructed for ourselves a picture of the USSR, and whatever happened had to be made to fit into that picture. Intelligence estimators can hardly commit a more abominable sin.

Germany

There are no less than eight special papers on Soviet policy respecting Germany, besides a good many paragraphs on the subject in other Soviet estimates. Two problems were paramount: (a) the

probable Soviet reaction to West German rearmament, and (b) whether, and for what inducement, the Soviets might withdraw from East Germany. A third problem of more current nature, which often cropped up under the stimulus of events, was that of Soviet actions respecting Berlin.

Before treating these -- which need only be done briefly -- there is a paragraph on Soviet objectives in Germany which is worth quoting as a horrible example of the estimative art. This appeared as the first paragraph both in NIE-4 (2 February 1951) and NIE-53 (19 February 1952):

> The Kremlin has the ultimate aim of bringing under its control the strategically important area and resources of Germany. The Kremlin regards any substantial part of Germany not under Soviet control, particularly if associated with the Western powers, as a major obstacle to the realization of this ultimate aim and as a potential threat to its own security. The Kremlin will not consider as satisfactory any solution of the German problem that does not promise to bring all of Germany within the Soviet orbit as a step in its aim for world domination.

Why this spate of sentences to divulge a simple idea? This reader's reaction, six years later, is to wonder what we were trying to cover up, for I have wholly forgotten the battles that must have raged about this paragraph. Still, it appears that we thought that the Soviets wanted to get control of all of Germany, and I daresay this was a valid estimate.

As for Soviet reaction to German rearmament, we estimated that the Soviets would not go to war about it without further provocations, and they have not. On the other hand, German rearmament has never yet developed quite as we thought it would in 1950-1952, and it is hard to say whether our estimates of probable Soviet reactions to it were or were not valid. The Soviet leaders have said most of the things we predicted they would say, as far back as NIE-17 (25 December 1950). But they have not done as much by way of stirring up violence in West Germany, subverting the government, damaging the economy, etc., as we used to predict. As late as NIE 11-3-55 we said that the most likely Soviet course in countering the threat of German rearmament would include rigorous measures -- a sharp build-up of Soviet and Satellite military capabilities, and possibly more threatening courses of action "against Berlin, or in the Far East, or elsewhere, with the purpose of arousing fear of nuclear war. . ." Next year in NIE 11-4-56 we had to eat our collective shirts:

> . . .The failure of the USSR to prevent the ratification of the Paris Agreements in the spring of 1955 brought about a reorientation of Soviet policy in Europe. Recognizing that West German rearmament could no longer be delayed by threats. . . the USSR sought to. . . .rely instead upon the effect of its shift to a generally conciliatory posture to obtain both a delay in German rearmament and a weakening of NATO ties and effort.

West German rearmament has certainly been delayed, but I do not know whether Soviet policies have had much to do with it.

Our views as to Soviet withdrawal from East Germany have been quite consistent right down to the present day -- which means that they have been a bit hedged and diluted. Usually we have said that the Soviets would not withdraw, and we have given various reasons which still appear valid. But from time to time one or another member of the IAC has put in a dissent saying that the Soviets might withdraw under certain conditions (e.g. USAF in NIE-53; JIG in SE-47.) And sometimes we have had a paragraph in the text saying that they might withdraw, also under certain conditions (e.g. in NIE-95, and in NIE 11-3-55, when State dissented saying the likelihood was "small"). This seems to be about where we stand today, though I believe all would concur that the chances of a withdrawal now seem if anything less than before.

On the whole, our estimates of Soviet policy in Germany stand up well.

The Middle East

Our estimates concerning Soviet activities in the Middle East constitute the second greatest failure in our estimative record -- the greatest being our estimates respecting the course of events in the European Satellites. Let us recall that in September, 1955, the Soviets offered Egypt an arms deal, and Egypt accepted. This was the first step in a program of political, economic, and military assistance to certain Middle Eastern states which has formed one of the main elements in Soviet foreign policy during the past two and a half years. It is fair to quote in full the single long paragraph on the Middle East which stands in NIE 11-3-55, published on 17 May 1955:

> The USSR has devoted increased attention to the countries of this area during the last year. It has settled long-standing border and financial issues with Iran, and has achieved a growing influence over the economy of Afghanistan, mainly through expanded trade and economic development programs. The USSR has attempted through propaganda and diplomacy to prevent the extension of Middle East defense plans, and in particular has warned Iran of the undesirable consequences that would stem from formal Iranian adherence to any non-Soviet military bloc. If Iran moves openly to take such a step, the USSR would almost certainly adopt a more truculent attitude, and would probably threaten to invoke its 1921 treaty agreements with Iran, which provide for Soviet occupation of northern Iran under certain circumstances. We believe, however, that the USSR would not openly intervene in Iran with military force unless it had decided for reasons of policy unrelated to Iran to accept substantial risk of general war. The USSR will probably step up its activities throughout the Middle East in proportion to the success of present Western efforts to build toward a situation of strength through regional alliance and external military support. The USSR will probably in any case press its present effort to gain a controlling position in Afghanistan.

Incidentally, in the same NIE we committed ourselves to the judgment that Southeast Asia would almost certainly appear to the Soviets as the most profitable area for the extension of Communist influence in the year or two ahead.

The failure to foresee what was going to happen in the Middle East arose in part out of a deeper error in our view of Soviet policy. We had grown accustomed to the attitudes of Stalin, who tended to divide the world between Communist states with whose governments he was willing to do business, and other states whose governments were non-Communist, hostile, and should be overthrown. We had thought (and I daresay Stalin had thought) in terms of violent revolution, subversion, or even conquest. Accordingly, when we considered possible Soviet activities in the Middle East we tended to look for the beginnings of these things, for the building up of Communist cadres, and for all the kinds of wickedness with which we had become familiar. (See, for instance, our numerous pronouncements on the Soviets in Iran). We did not foresee that the new Soviet leaders would deal in quite a different fashion with these countries. We expected the Devil to appear with horns and tail, breathing fire and brimstone; when he showed himself as quite an amiable fellow we were undone.

VII

EPILOGUE

It would be well if the threads of this almost interminable discourse could be brought together, at the end, into some pattern. A lesson or two ought to be drawn, and precepts formulated for instruction and edification. A validity study should be a vehicle of improvement, not merely of congratulation and abuse.

Yet I find it almost impossible to derive any useful moral from the tale. True, we ought to strive to be more wise, perceptive, diligent, and literate; but this is no revelation. True also, we ought to be given more relevant and useful data, but this is a point irrelevant to this study. What one needs is to discover persistent or recurring tendencies which have led us into error on repeated occasions and which are susceptible to correction -- e.g. a tendency to react either too enthusiastically or too sluggishly to new evidence, or a consistent inclination to over- or under-estimate on certain subjects, or a lack of technique in certain lines of investigation, or a propensity to certain logical fallacies. There are examples of these and other shortcomings, but I cannot see them as consistent or habitual.

There is one matter, however, already raised in this paper but still worth an additional word or two. This is our disinclination to foresee or to recognize change. The foregoing pages contain various instances of important things the Soviets have done which we have not foreseen, and of significant developments which have occurred sometimes without our even warning that they were within the bounds of reasonable possibility. On the other hand, I can recall scarcely an instance in which we predicted something involving a truly significant change in the pattern of Soviet conduct, and none at all when we made such a prediction and then found it unfulfilled. The situation is more accurately put in abstract terms -- we have naturally, in the course of our business, constructed images or patterns of the USSR in general, and of its various aspects and elements in particular, such as the long range bomber force. Then we have used these patterns as a basis for our projection of future developments, for the most part with success. Once we have made our patterns, however, we are loath to change them, and we have on occasion been caught short because the Soviets have jumped out of the character in which we cast them.

Even if the foregoing be admitted as a true and useful generalization concerning our estimates, it is a dubious basis for any program of corrective

action. The construction of patterns is an essential part of the estimative process; the disinclination to change them is, within limits, admirable, and is in any case an inevitable attribute of our huge, conservative, bureaucracy. We have, after all, been more often right than wrong. We should do no service, and indeed should do a grave disservice, if we bent with every wind of evidence or speculation. In short, since to err is human, it is better for us to err on the side of conservatism and immobility.

Yet it remains a striking fact that our errors have been almost entirely of the conservative sort. Clearly, it seems to me, we can afford the risk of an occasional deviation in the other direction. We might well unbend a bit, speculate a little more, and above all, perhaps, accelerate the effort (already under way) to construct our patterns of Soviet society with a less doctrinaire and more humane touch. We could do with a little more in ourselves of that "flexibility" which we have discovered in Khrushchev.