

NSC BRIEFING

16 MAY 1956

SOVIET FORCE CUT

- I USSR says will cut 1.2 million by May '57: details tricky.
- A. Ground forces cut to eliminate 60 divisions and independent brigades
1. Present strength: 175 line divs, 95 brigades, 20 artillery divs, 70 A-A.
- B. Navy to mothball 375 warships.
1. Present strength: 251 major, 2,300 minor naval vessels.
 2. 110 of major vessels now over-age.
 3. Postwar submarines (183) key element in strength.
- C. Air to disband 3 divisions.
1. This only 29 of total 158 divs.
 2. Cut may be in Germany (24th Air Army).
- D. East Germany specified for 30,000 cut (out of 437,000).
1. But obscure where cut to be made.
- E. Added to '55 cut (840,000), more represents 43% reduction total USSR armed forces.
- II. Motives:
- A. Pressure West to follow lead.
 - B. Premised on unlikelihood war in immediate future.
 - C. Reappraisal of strategic doctrine in nuclear age.
 - D. Emphasis on modern weapons procurement: roar per ruble.
 - E. Increase civilian labor pool.

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15 May 1956

SOVIET FORCE REDUCTION

- I. USSR's 14 May announcement (1,200,000-man cut by May '57) put out to two weeks of hints, rumors. In tricky way that Soviets customarily fiddle with figures, details of announcement raise almost as many questions as they give answers:
 - A. Ground Forces: Announced intent is to demobilize 63 "divisions and independent brigades" from estimated Army total of 175 line divisions, 95 independent brigades, 20 artillery and 10 anti-aircraft. (12,000 to division; 3-10,000 to brigade). BUT these 63 units are not all ground forces: language of announcement makes this total include 3 "air divisions."
 - B. Navy: Announced intent is to put 375 "warships" in "reserve" from estimated total of 251 major surface vessels, 121 submarines and more than 2,300 other minor naval craft (patrol, mine, amphibious, etc.). BUT of 672 major Soviet combat vessels (surface & subs.), approx. 110 are already over-age or inactive (old battleships, cruisers, destroyers & submarines) and could be mothballed tomorrow without impairing Red Fleet efficiency. In fact, key offensive element in Red Fleet is force of 183 new long-range submarines, so that large cut even in active surface units would not substantially reduce Soviet Navy's offensive threat.

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- C. Air Force: Announced intent is to disband 3 air "divisions" (flexible unit designation usually containing 3 regiments) out of estimated total 475 air "regiments" (i.e. 158 "divisions" of three "regiments" each). This is obviously smallest cut of all: only 2%. BUT even here, language of announcement is obscure--NOT clear whether cut will be made in home Air structure or confined to units in East Germany, where 24th Air Army (Soviet's largest--36 regiments) is stationed.
- D. Final obscurity in statement also involves East Germany: after listing division cuts, language of announcement continues: "and other military units numbering more than 30,000 men which are stationed on the territory of the German Democratic Republic." Soviet ground forces in East Germany total some 400,000 men, plus another 37,000 Air, support, etc., but announcement makes it far from clear just where this 30,000 cut will come.
- E. In summary, announced cut (taken together with Aug '55 announced cut of 640,000, which G-2 has yet to find any evidence for "accepting") would represent 43% drop in total Soviet armed forces personnel.

II. These are the facts and figures, with all their obscurities. What about the "why?" of this Soviet move?

- A. First and foremost, of course, is fact that announcement (whether or not ever actually carried out) is aimed at pressuring US and other NATO countries to reduce size of their defense systems.

B. Second, if we accept probability that reductions will actually be made (which is considered opinion of Embassy Moscow, and we agree), we must conclude that such a Soviet action reflects a probable Kremlin belief that general war is unlikely in immediate future.

C. Also a number of other significant meanings:

1. May reflect re-thinking of broad Soviet military requirements in nuclear age: with resulting adjustments in total force levels and in balance between ground, naval and air strength (not unlike US adjustments of recent years.).

2. Substantial saving in personnel, maintenance and operating costs (perhaps 19 billion rubles) may reflect emphasis, instead, on procurement of modern weapons and equipment, designed to increase mobility and effectiveness of remaining units--that is, "more roar for a ruble."

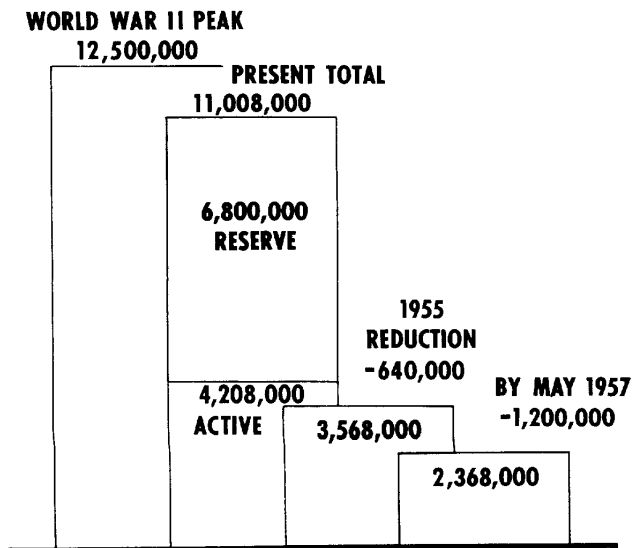
Example: if (as we anticipate) USSR announced a military budget cut of around 20%, remainder of budget (not even counting hidden military expenditures) would represent actual increase in expenditure per Soviet soldier by some 30% over 1955. Moreover, on this same basis, the procurement rate per man of these modern and increasingly costly weapons system would increase by two-thirds between 1955 and 1957.

3. Finally, the addition of substantial numbers of demobilized soldiers to the Soviet labor force will definitely ease the pressure on tight spots in the USSR's economy. Up to now, we have felt that it could be extremely difficult

for the USSR's industrial labor force to meet the ambitious goals set in the sixth 5 Year Plan and at the same time reduce the work week from 48 to 41 hours. The announced releases clearly improve prospects for overfulfillment of 1956 industrial goals not only because of the increased civilian labor force but also because of the freeing of funds for additional investment.

a. In this connection, a Soviet "saving" of 19 billion rubles of former military spending is obviously not going to hurt the USSR's program of foreign "trade & aid". However, we continue to hold the opinion that the Soviet Union has more than adequate resources for economic warfare in underdeveloped areas, whether or not military expenditures are cut back.

STRENGTH OF USSR ARMED FORCES
(ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR, EXCLUDING SECURITY FORCES)



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1. Border and Internal Security

MVD troops responsible for border and internal security and convoy duty are listed in Soviet legal commentaries as units of the armed forces. In wartime they are subject of the operational control of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but normally are organized, trained, and directed by the Main Administration of Border and Internal Security of the MVD, which functions as an All-Union type administration unit.

a. Border Troops--The MVD has full responsibility for the political security and shares with the Ministry of Health responsibility for the sanitary security of the borders of the USSR. The MVD also controls in part the establishment, transfer, or elimination of customs houses and customs posts in agreement with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

With respect to maintenance of political security of borders, the MVD is charged with preventing illegal entry or departure of persons or goods. In addition to these general duties, the border troops must prevent the illegal entry of literature or arms which might be used for counterrevolutionary purposes, maintain public order in "border strips," defend the border population from armed attack, protect maritime property on river and sea boundaries up to a distance of 12 nautical miles out to sea, and insure the proper navigation, fishing, and diversion of waters on border rivers, lakes, and artificial waterways.

Along each border of the USSR there extends a series of successive "security" strips or zones, each with an "appropriate regime" of border guards and regular and special

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points of entrance or exit. Along dry land boundaries the first strip is 4 meters in depth, the second 500 meters, the third 7.5 kilometers, and the last 22 kilometers. The maritime boundary is flanked on the land side by a first zone of 7.5 kilometers and this in turn by one of 22 kilometers. At the same time there is a security area extending 12 miles offshore. The MVD border troops establish and man the necessary gates and patrols in the border strips, and are equipped with motorcycles, automobiles, horses, dogs, light patrol planes, and small naval craft.

Movement into and residence in the border zones are controlled by the border troops and organs of the militia. Persons residing in the zones must have a special stamp on their passport, but they are allowed freedom of movement within the administrative region in which they reside. Persons desiring to enter the border zones for any purpose must obtain a pass from the militia at their place of residence indicating their itinerary. Within 24 hours after entering the border zone a visitor must register his passport and special pass with the militia; on departure he checks out with the same militia office. Only the places listed on the pass may be visited unless the militia permits further movement, and any temporary or unforeseen delay en route must be reported to the militia at once. The special pass is turned in to the issuing office at the individual's permanent residence upon return from the border zone.

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The border troops possess a number of special powers for the performance of their duties. Within border strips and zones they may arrest suspicious persons, make personal searches and searches of living and other quarters, and seize contraband goods and material evidence. Beyond the limits of border zones and strips they may effect search, seizure, and arrest if in direct pursuit of criminals or dealers in contraband. The assistance of the Army or Navy may be requested if the naval craft and air brigades employed by the MVD border troops do not suffice. Nonmilitary ships, irrespective of flag, are subject to inspection by border troops (military vessels and aircraft are subject to special procedures). Improper papers, illegal loading, violation of fishing regulations or other rules for maritime industries are sufficient warrant for arrest, and any documents regarding search and arrest are drawn up by the chief of the border guard and the ship master concerned. Border troops are not permitted to enter foreign waters or ports in pursuit of ships violating border regulations, and they are subject to special rules regarding the use of firearms on both land and sea.

b. Internal Security and Convoy Troops--Soviet sources do not discuss in detail the organization and functions of the internal security and convoy troops. During the war the internal security troops and some of the border troops were employed in the rear of the Soviet Army to guard installations, apprehend enemy agents and paratroopers, mop up former combat

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zones, and arrest Soviet stragglers or deserters. During peacetime internal security troops are divided into 1) special divisions for the use of the MVD in major instances of anti-Soviet and partisan activity and 2) regular brigades assigned to the Republic MVD's to guarantee the internal security of the Republic. Wholesale movements of dissident populations to labor camps or colonies are apparently the responsibility of both the internal security and convoy troops. Convoy troops are primarily concerned with the transport of large convoys of prisoners to forced labor camps. During wartime they are also charged with the protection of convoys of soldiers and supplies and assure the uninterrupted movement of such convoys.

Militarized Security Forces of the MVD

The MVD controls approximately 400,000 men organized into military units. These units execute protective, preventive, and punitive measures designed to preserve domestic security and order within the Soviet Union and to protect the national boundaries, important places, objects, shipments, and persons. The MVD troops, which are commanded by a professional officer corps, serving under military regulations similar to those of the Soviet Army, are composed of conscripts drafted under the Soviet mobilization laws.

The task of the Interior Troops is to maintain the security and stability of the Soviet regime by suppressing all organized anti-regime activity. Controlled by the Main Directorate of Interior Troops (Glavnoye Upravleniye Vnutrennykh Voysk--GUVV), they include both regular Interior Troops and Troops of Special Designation (Voyska Osobogo Naznacheniya--OSNAZ), sometimes called Special-Purpose Troops. Although the mission of both the regular and the Special-Purpose Troops is the same, they differ in that the former are organized into units up to regiment in size and are stationed permanently in certain military districts, whereas the latter are organized into divisional-size units and are maintained in a central reserve for use in any part of the Soviet Union. Two OSNAZ divisions reportedly are in the area of Moscow.

The Main Directorate of Interior Troops in Moscow determines the strength, mission, organization, and permanent location of each unit. However, elements may be placed under the temporary operational control of operational agents of

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security agencies to carry out special missions, such as deportations, combatting armed partisan groups, or quelling disturbances in labor camps. Such operational activities usually are directed by the security administration in the area concerned. Especially important operations, however, are directed by a special operational officer sent out from Moscow.

OSNAZ troops have retained the organizational structure developed during World War II--a division of 8,000 to 12,000, composed of 3 to 8 regiments ~~from~~ of from 1,650 to 2,000 men each. Each regiment reportedly consists of 3 battalions of approximately 500 men each, plus service, supply, signal, engineer, and transport units. Regiments of the regular Interior Troops are organized in the same manner as the regiments of OSNAZ troops.

Convoy Troops, under the Main Directorate of Convoy Troops (Glavnoye Upravleniye Konvoynykh Voysk--GUKV), have the ~~mission~~ mission of guarding prisoners in transit between prisons and labor camps and of guarding shipments of strategic materials, such as uranium ore. Like other security troops, Convoy Troops may be placed under temporary control of operational security officers for special missions, such as the resettlement of minority groups. Convoy Troops are organized into divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies, with the regiment reportedly the highest peacetime echelon. Regimental strength varies with the location and requirements of the particular home station; reported strengths vary from 600 to 1,600 men. Each unit has a permanent home station, to which it returns at the

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conclusion of a convoying assignment.

MVD Signal Troops, subordinate to the Directorate of Government Signal Troops (Upravleniye Voysk Pravitelstvennoy Svyazi--UVPS), are responsible for the installation, maintenance, and security of communications facilities, such as telephone and telegraph lines, between Moscow and high-level Government headquarters, including Military District headquarters, Groups of Forces (in occupied Europe), and, in wartime, Fronts. The tactical unit is the Independent Government Signal Regiment, directly subordinate to the Directorate in Moscow. The regiment is composed of battalions and separate companies, with an approximate strength of 1,000 officers and men. It is believed that one regiment is attached to each Military District and Group headquarters.

MVD Border Troops, under control of the Main Directorate of Border Troops (Glavnoye Upravleniye Pogranichnykh Voysk--GUPV), have the mission of maintaining the security of the national borders against unauthorized exit and entry, of preventing smuggling, of defending the borders against armed incursions, and of maintaining order in the border areas. Security measures at authorized crossing points, such as Brest on the Soviet-Polish border, and at seaports, such as Leningrad and Vladivostok, are the responsibility of the Border Troops. The Maritime Border Guard (Morskaya Pogranichnaya Okhrana--MPO) operates divisions of patrol boats for maintaining the security of the coasts.

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Border troops are organized into Detachments (Otryady) of 500 to 1,000 or more men, divided into Komendatury, and subdivided into Outposts (Zastavy), which may be either cavalry or infantry in type. The Outpost, which is approximately on the same level as the company in the Army, is the basic operational unit and employs its personnel in patrolling, in manning watch-towers and hidden listening posts, and in conducting searches and ambushes. In maintaining frontier security, border troops use physical obstacles and warning devices, including barbed-wire fences, electrified wires, wire nets, trip wires, ditches, cleared and plowed lanes, and electric detection devices.