

SECRET**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20310

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Executive Registry

83-3831

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DAMI-ZA

28 July 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: NIE on Probable Soviet Response to INF Deployments (S)

ARMY review completed.

1. (S) Because I will not be at the NFIB discussion and because I find this NIE a difficult one, I want to share a few thoughts about it directly with you.
2. (S) Unlike almost all other issues on the USSR, I have no clear and comfortable feelings about where to come down, that is, how to estimate probable Soviet behavior. Many of the assertions in the draft strike me as wild guesses with very little to support them. There, however, is a structure to the INF deployments and possible Soviet reactions which I would like to spell out because it is not clear in the draft text.
3. (S) No one wants to give SS-20s in Cuba more than a very low probability, but they are the only really "analogous" measure against U.S. territory. The Soviets have no history of military deployments for only political purposes. They always consider first the "military operationality" of deployments and fold that into the political context. Therefore, SSBNs, ALCMs, SLCMs, etc., do not seem highly plausible. To get the political effect from submarines off our coast, they would have to be visible; if they are visible, they are vulnerable, losing their military worth. SS-20s in Cuba do not have this problem.
4. (S) The 1962 understanding with the USSR is highly ambiguous. I reviewed the record at the White House in 1978/1979 to learn this in detail. Moreover, U.S. behavior in response to the SSBN visits in 1970/71, MIG-23 deployments in 1978, and the Soviet brigade flap in 1979 all tended to erode what is left of that understanding. Finally, the Soviets, I believe, have said to us in some channels that P-II in Europe would invalidate the 1962 understanding which in Moscow's view included our removal of IRBMs from Turkey.
5. (S) Suppose Moscow does deploy SS-20s to Cuba and we discover them. If we ask them to remove those missiles, Andropov can say that he would truly like to do so, but the U.S. must first remove the P-IIs. He can then go public, telling the

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Europeans that he would like to remove the SS-20s in exchange for P-IIIs. At that point it is no longer a U.S.-Soviet affair. European governments are at once involved in the bargaining. Would they stand tough with us? I wonder. They could easily plead for a "peaceful" settlement by mutual withdrawals. Or they could tell us to accept the SS-20s because Europe is already living under the SS-20 threat. Why can't the U.S. do so as well? Either reaction is undesirable for the U.S.

6. (S) The intelligence analysts tend to believe that the U.S. public would not tolerate SS-20s in Cuba, that the matter is too volatile for the Soviets to risk it. Is that really true? Would Congress be of one mind? How would the NYT and The Washington Post react? The Freeze Movement leadership? This is not 1962, and we cannot assume a similar consensus. Nor is there reason to believe that the Soviets do not understand this.

7. (S) Nor is the military force balance the same as 1962. I doubt that the President would really want to risk escalation to see who would blink first in light of the present strategic balance. This shift in the correlation of military forces tends to be overlooked in the NIE.

8. (S) Most disturbing for me is to consider the implications of such a crisis. If the U.S. tries to force a removal of SS-20s and fails, the consequences would be dramatic, a strategic turning point in the postwar period. Our credibility in Europe would be nil. Could NATO survive? If we were to accept the SS-20 deployment in order to follow through on INF (which would be the only prudent course of action in light of the military balance), the political implications would be equally dramatic. And if we got the removal of SS-20s by removing P-IIIs from Europe, we would have given Moscow the final say in any future NATO military force building, an awful precedent to establish.

9. (S) I cannot bring myself to put a high probability on Soviet SS-20 deployment to Cuba, but as I think through the payoffs it might hold for Andropov, I cannot dismiss it nearly so easily as the NIE does. In fact, I become very deeply disturbed by the prospects. It is difficult to believe that the Soviet General Staff and the Politburo have not worked out the logic to their options in this regard. True, the risks may look high to them, but the payoffs would be very high. At the same time, I can't rule out no Soviet response (Khrushchev backed off big threats in 1958 and 1961) although it looks unlikely. Finally, Moscow may be able to alter the context of the threat of a response with a new INF proposal in September.

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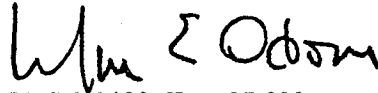
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10. (S) In sum, even if we judge the probability very low, it seems that the logic to the SS-20 option is so serious that the policy community should be encouraged to give it the greatest contingency planning attention.



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