

SNIE 100-7-57
11 June 1957

~~SECRET~~

Nº 274

SPECIAL
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 100-7-57

PROBABLE SINO-SOVIET REACTIONS
TO US DEPLOYMENT OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS SYSTEMS

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Joint Staff, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Concurred in by the
INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 11 June 1957. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, the Joint Staff; and the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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PROBABLE SINO-SOVIET REACTIONS TO US DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS SYSTEMS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Sino-Soviet Bloc reactions to the buildup of US-manned nuclear weapons and related delivery systems in countries adjacent to or near its borders.

SCOPE NOTE

We do not consider in this paper the effect on non-Bloc countries of US nuclear deployment or of Communist propaganda based on this deployment. We also do not consider Bloc reactions to the eventual deployment overseas of intermediate range ballistic missiles. Other aspects of the general problem of increasing nuclear capabilities will be discussed in NIE 100-4-57, "Implications for the Communist Bloc and the Free World of Growing Nuclear Capabilities," and NIE 100-6-57, "Nuclear Weapons Production in Fourth Countries — Likelihood and Consequences," which are to be published shortly.

THE ESTIMATE

Present Bloc Estimate of and Reactions to US Deployment

1. The leaders of the Sino-Soviet Bloc almost certainly attribute a nuclear capability to all US combat forces overseas. While they may be uncertain about the extent to which nuclear components have actually been deployed in conjunction with delivery systems, in prudence they would assume that the deployment of such components has occurred or will take place in the future, or that it could be carried out quickly in time of emergency. Thus, at present the Sino-Soviet leaders almost certainly consider that all US guided missile units, combat air units, and major ground forces overseas, as well as carriers and missile-equipped cruisers and submarines, have a nuclear capability.
2. For the future, the Sino-Soviet leaders probably believe that, in the absence of a major change in the international political climate, the US intends to continue a steady buildup of its nuclear capabilities. They probably estimate that the US will seek to deploy its nuclear capabilities within effective range of their key targets, to increase the number of bases, and to include in this deployment improved weapons systems as these are developed and produced.
3. The Bloc reaction to US deployment of nuclear weapons has included both military and political measures. The military reaction has been an integral part of the general Bloc military buildup, which has included a continuing emphasis on long-range nuclear capabilities designed in part to deter US attack

and on defensive measures against US delivery capabilities. Politically, the Bloc leaders have sought to retard or reduce US deployment by a continuous propaganda and diplomatic campaign aimed at nations associated with the US effort through alliances and base agreements and at nations contemplating such association. They have tried to intimidate these countries and at the same time to persuade them that they face no threat requiring a common defense. In addition, they have used US overseas deployment as a major subject in their worldwide anti-US propaganda.

4. The USSR has recently sought in a series of communications to frighten the European allies of the US by pointing out that their cooperation in US deployment involves them in the danger of nuclear war. Use of this tactic probably stems from a belief that, since European appreciation of nuclear destructiveness is clearly growing, fear of nuclear war offers an increasingly advantageous point of attack on US deployment and the NATO alliance system itself. We do not believe that the tone of current Soviet pronouncements represent a new policy departure or reflects a major change in the Soviet estimate concerning possible US intentions to attack.

Probable Effect of Further Deployments on the Bloc Estimate of US Intentions

5. Bloc leaders in reappraising, in the light of future US deployments, their estimate of US intentions regarding general war, would take into account the area involved and the effectiveness of the weapons systems. Additional gradual deployments of existing systems to countries where they are presently located are unlikely to produce any change in this estimate. Deployments of existing weapons into new areas would cause some concern, but probably would not change this overall Bloc estimate.¹ Bloc apprehensions over deployments of short-range nuclear weapons systems, particularly to new areas, probably are heightened by concern that these

¹ See also paragraphs 10-15, relating to specific areas.

moves will lead to the later deployment of long-range systems. The eventual deployment of new, long-range weapons, and particularly IRBMs, within range of vital Bloc targets would present a significantly different situation.

6. Further US deployments would probably also affect the Bloc leaders' estimate of US political intentions. These moves would tend to reinforce their suspicions that the US does not intend to reduce East-West tensions, but instead proposes, by every available means, including military pressures, to pursue vigorously policies aimed at extracting concessions from the Bloc.

Probable General Bloc Reactions to Further Deployments

7. We do not believe that further deployments of nuclear weapons systems now available would, in the view of Bloc leaders, alter the military situation so radically as to require that they forestall them by force. Hence we do not believe that such deployments would lead them to initiate hostilities. Further, we do not believe that these deployments would compel them to offer political concessions.

8. The USSR and Communist China will energetically seek by means of propaganda and diplomacy to prevent or at least delay foreign agreement to further US deployments of nuclear weapons systems, as well as to undermine existing agreements. They will continue to issue warnings to the governments and peoples of actual and potential host countries. To sharpen this point, the USSR may supplement its general theme of Communist military strength with selective revelations about its own capabilities for nuclear delivery. Charges of American "atom rattling" will take an even more important place in Communist propaganda. Bloc leaders probably estimate that such propaganda will weaken US influence and promote neutralism in Europe and especially in uncommitted states throughout the world.

9. Efforts probably will also be made to press the development of Bloc deterrent capabilities. These might include the stationing of new or

additional nuclear weapons systems in Eastern Europe and perhaps even in Communist China or North Korea and an increased emphasis on the production of improved delivery vehicles. New US deployments will tend to support the well-established Communist convictions of the necessity for maintenance of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe, the solidarity of the Bloc, and continued top priority for military production.

Reactions to Deployments in Specific Areas

10. In the *NATO area*, the Soviet leaders would probably take a more serious view of deployments into new areas than they would take of deployments which only increased existing nuclear capabilities. They would regard deployments to Norway, Denmark, Greece, or especially Turkey as increasing US and local capabilities in varying degrees and enlarging the number of peripheral locations which Soviet offensive and defensive planning must consider. They would also regard them as signifying an increase in US influence in these areas. If these deployments were confined to weapons which would not reach vital Bloc targets, their concern would be mitigated somewhat, although they would fear that such moves opened the door to the later deployment of more advanced systems. Any deployment to these areas of nuclear delivery systems which were within range of such targets might cause the Soviets to believe there had been a definite hardening in US attitudes.

11. The USSR would probably react sharply to proposed deployments in the countries mentioned above, subjecting their governments to heavy pressure and seeking to mobilize popular domestic opposition. It might carry out naval or other maneuvers in an effort to intimidate these states. If these measures failed to forestall US deployment, the USSR would probably strengthen its forces in adjacent areas and make other changes in the disposition of its forces within the Soviet Union. In the case of Greece or Turkey, this response might include, as a more extreme measure, the introduction of Soviet troops into Bulgaria.

12. The USSR will continue to consider that *West Germany* has a special position. It will seek to prevent further US deployments there or at least to exploit such deployments for political purposes. It will continue to stress to Germany's neighbors the revival of German militarism and to warn that nuclear deployments decrease the likelihood of reunification. In seeking to offset the military disadvantages resulting from further US deployment in Germany, the USSR might introduce new or additional nuclear weapons systems into Eastern Europe or even, as a more extreme measure, send Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia under the Warsaw Pact.

13. *Iran* would probably cause the most serious concern of all possible areas of deployment. US deployment there would involve the possibility that, in spite of the risk of counteraction by the US and the Baghdad Pact countries, the USSR might move forces into Iran, citing the provisions of the 1921 treaty. It would, in any event, be a reversal of previous US and Western policy against stationing troops in Iran. For this reason and because of the proximity to the USSR, the Soviet leaders, while they probably would not conclude from this action alone that the US intended to attack, would infer that the US was determined to exert maximum military pressures in the East-West conflict. In addition to intense diplomatic and propaganda campaigns, the USSR would probably seek UN action to forestall this move.

14. In the *Far East*, the Sino-Soviet leaders almost certainly do not regard the present stationing of Matadors on *Taiwan* as signifying a change in US political or military intentions. Apart from continuing allegations of US aggressiveness and of the subservience of the National government, the Chinese Communists are likely to react by strengthening their defensive capabilities in Southeast China and by pressing the USSR for their own nuclear weapons.

15. As to *South Korea*, Sino-Soviet leaders almost certainly would also conclude that US nuclear deployments there did not signify any change in US political or military intentions, although they would loudly proclaim

a violation of truce terms. Such deployment would raise in the Soviet leaders' minds the question of their stationing nuclear weapons systems in North Korea. Their attitude to this problem would be complicated by the further question of what forces — North Korean, Chinese Communist, or Soviet — these systems should be assigned to. Because of the political disadvantages which the Soviet leaders would foresee in any of these choices, they probably would not consider the increase

in US capabilities sufficiently threatening to force them to a decision on this point. Instead, they would probably take such measures as strengthening of local defense, particularly air defenses, and improvement of their own capabilities for nuclear attack and air defense in the Soviet Far East. Deployment to South Korea would, even more than deployment to Taiwan, cause the Chinese Communists to press the USSR for the acquisition of nuclear weapons.