

# **THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST**

31 AUGUST 1961

**TOP SECRET**

### SOVIET NUCLEAR TEST ANNOUNCEMENT

The Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, at its meeting yesterday, made the following statement:

In connection with the 30 August 1961 Soviet announcement of their decision to resume nuclear weapon testing there has been increasing evidence since the middle of August suggesting that preparations have been under way for nuclear tests at Novaya Zemlya (in the eastern Barents Sea). The pattern of activity has been similar in many, but not all, respects to that preceding earlier Soviet high yield test series in this area. The buildup of both ship and air logistical support required for testing

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has continued and appears to be sufficient for the conduct of a nuclear test at any time in the future. Although the delivery aircraft of the unit previously used to drop large nuclear test devices have not yet been identified in the area, suitable bomber-aircraft are available there. A large number of aircraft and ships believed to be connected with the Soviet air-to-surface missile development and testing have been identified in the area near Novaya Zemlya. This latter activity closely resembles the pattern followed last year when three Cherub air-to-surface missiles were fired in operational exercises in Novaya Zemlya area. It is possible that the nuclear test and air-to-surface missile exercises are independent.

The Soviet statement also mentioned "creating a series of super-powerful nuclear bombs with yields equivalent to 20, 30, 50, and 100 million tons of TNT" and stated that they could be launched to any point in the world with the same rockets used for the Soviet man-in-space flights. It is estimated that by testing the Soviets could achieve the 100 MT yield, but the warhead weight would be considerably in excess of the intercontinental payload capacity available to the Soviets with their present ICBM or space boosters. Development of weapons in all these high yield categories could be accomplished with tests in the lower megaton range.

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These were among the early international reactions:

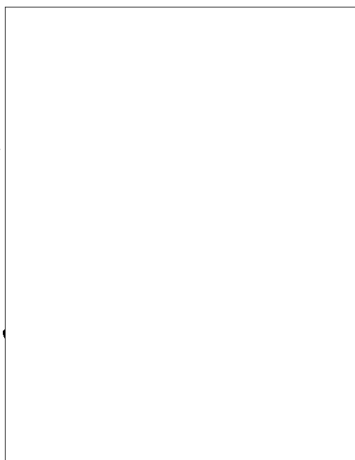
a) Tokyo: the press reported dismay on the part of conservatives and leftists alike. The leftist Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs termed the step "regrettable";

b) Belgrade: Various unidentified Asians called the move "shocking" and a "slap in the face" to the conference; [redacted] 50X1

c) London: the Foreign Office expressed astonishment "at such a retrograde step";

d) Geneva: Western diplomats were reported to be stunned." Ormsby-Gore, recording his shock, said that the world's verdict "will no doubt be clear." [redacted] 50X1

1. Brazil



Late press reports assert that the Brazilian armed forces have been ordered into action against Rio Grande do Sul where Goulart's brother-in-law, Governor Brizola, with the support of the local military, threatens armed resistance against any anti-Goulart solution and continues highly inflammatory and anti-American propaganda. The step may indicate that the military chiefs have taken over the government. Earlier this morning, in a joint session, the Brazilian congress had given overwhelming approval to a constitutional amendment which would permit Goulart to be installed as ceremonial president, with a prime minister (possibly Kubitschek) to be named by congress. As yet undetermined is the question of presidential powers, with some favoring substantial powers akin to those of De Gaulle and others a mere figurehead like Gronchi. Goulart, meanwhile, has reached Panama. His destination appears to be Buenos Aires or Montevideo, where he would have a jumping-off place into Southern Brazil.

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## 2. Berlin

a) The US Mission in Berlin reports that West Berliners' nerves have been further frayed by recent Communist statements about air access. Our mission believes that, if the Communists succeed in establishing any kind of control over civilian traffic in the corridors, the West Berliners' 50X1 feeling of entrapment is likely to reach panic proportions;

b) [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] West Berlin musicians and actors 50X1 as well as doctors working in East Berlin have recently been urged by East Berlin authorities to move there permanently before 31 August, could presage further restrictive measures on the East-West German zonal border and the sector borders of Berlin.

c) further study of Moscow's 29 August announcement, holding up the release of servicemen due to end their tours in 1961, suggests that an increase of as much as 750,000 in the Soviet armed forces (the present total is about 3,000,000) could result. We believe, however, that this would happen only in the unlikely event that there were no discharges from the 1961 group as well as a full call-up of eligible new conscripts. A considerably smaller addition, possibly in the neighborhood of 350,000, is therefore, probable.

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NOTES

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B. Rumors of plotting against the Ethiopian Emperor are on the increase in Addis Ababa on the eve of his departure for the Belgrade Conference. Our Embassy believes that the lessons of last December's abortive revolt might give any plotters pause, but nevertheless, views the situation as fragile.

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WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS--30 August 1961

No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends to initiate direct military action in the immediate future.

The pattern of current activity in the Novaya Zemlya area (western Arctic) shows similarities to that which preceded previous Soviet nuclear tests in the area.

Berlin: There are indications of recent intensification of East German Air Force training for interception of high-performance aircraft. The Soviet note of 23 August and bloc propaganda on air access to Berlin appear designed to buttress East German claims to control of all West German travel to West Berlin. The Communists may now undertake harassment of Western civil air access to West Berlin.

Laos: Nothing significant has occurred to warrant changing last week's conclusion [redacted] the USSR will press even more strongly for the formation of a government under Souvanna Phouma during the next few weeks. However, we see no clear indications that the USSR will make significant concessions toward this end. There are indications of preparations by both the Communist and Phoumi forces for increased military operations.")

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