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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 January 1959

STAFF MEMORANDUM No. 1-59

SUBJECT: O/NE Consultants Conference, Princeton, 4 - 5 December 1958

## Participants:

Consultants

Hamilton Fish Armstrong  
 Cyril Black  
 George Kennan  
 Klaus Knorr  
 William Langer  
 Harold Linder  
 Philip Mosely  
 Joseph Strayer  
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Allen W. Dulles  
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 [redacted]

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## Agenda:

1. Discussion of BOUNDER.
2. NIE 11-4-58, "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies."

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1. After a brief discussion of the BOUNDER, the consultants concentrated their attention on paragraph 11 of the military chapter of NIE 11-4-58, which states that "Soviet military theoreticians do not regard surprise as the decisive factor in the outcome of a major war between great powers." The general tendency of the consultants was to controvert this statement.

The question of surprise attack

2. MOSELY was of the opinion that the published Soviet articles on surprise attack were not the operationally significant literature. Until the USSR had a significant bomber force it did not permit public discussion of air attack. Nor will the Soviet government allow public discussion of missiles until they have built up substantial strength in them. KENNAN was inclined, on the other hand, to credit the available literature as genuinely reflective of Soviet thinking, but to treat their view of surprise attack as ideologically conditioned. The Soviets could not admit to themselves that any weapon could destroy the "Socialist achievement." To do so would be to deny the Marxian doctrine of the inevitability of Socialism.

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3. There was some criticism of the paragraphs on surprise attack, mainly from KENNAN, on the grounds that they ignored the Wolfstetter doctrine of the second strike. Western retaliatory capacity is by-and-large "soft," that is, vulnerable to attack and known to the enemy. For the next few years US second strike capability will be so low that surprise may well have an important premium on it. As the number of Soviet missiles increases this US disadvantage becomes overwhelming. MOSELY suggested that since we do not know where their missile bases are located, we would have to direct our retaliatory force against Soviet cities, a procedure satisfactory only if the war were long and drawn-out.

4. LANGER and MOSELY thought of still another possible reason why Soviet military writers might think that surprise attack would not be decisive in a war between two great powers. Other Soviet doctrine, they suggested, meant only that, in the initial stages of the conflict, the Soviets would limit their nuclear strikes to Western retaliatory capability, in order to have something left worth conquering. The second stage of the war, the occupation of Western territory by means of conventional weapons, might be lengthy, but the issue would never be in doubt.

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5. KNORR was the only consultant who showed any inclination to accept the view that surprise might not be decisive. He averred that studies undertaken by the Rand Corporation had shown that atomic damage could be greatly reduced by modest expenditure. The Soviet leaders could be aware of this. MOSELY interjected that Rand studies do not necessarily reflect Air Force thinking.

Sino-Soviet relations

6. The question was raised whether paragraphs 17 and 20 of the chapter of NIE 11-4-58 which dealt with intra-Bloc relations did not place altogether too much emphasis on the possibility of serious differences arising between the Chinese and their Soviet ally. On this issue the consultants divided. MOSELY, supported by STRAYER, felt strongly that the paragraphs gave too much hope that the Chinese and the Soviets might quarrel. KENNAN, LANGER, LINDER, and YOUNG were of the contrary view.

7. The KENNAN group emphasized the primary of national interests. They pointed to the prospect of an enormous growth in Chinese industry, population, and power. They refused to believe that the ideological bond with Russia obliterated the Chinese national past. Had the Chinese really forgotten that Soviet Central Asia and the Maritime Provinces had once been parts of the Chinese empire? Differences certainly must

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arise as to whether Peiping or Moscow is to serve as the center for Asiatic Communism. In event of a break, Peiping would carry with it all of the Asian parties except the Indian and the Japanese, and even the Japanese party is split over which of the two capitals it should look to for leadership. Soviet economic aid to Communist China had apparently either ceased or been substantially reduced. In 1952 it was clear to those in the American Embassy in Moscow that the negotiations between Mao and Stalin were both prolonged and difficult. Transportation-wise and quantity-wise, Chinese demands are competitive with the needs of Siberia.

8. MOSELY and his supporters, on the other hand, felt that entirely too much time was wasted on speculation regarding a breach between the Chinese and the Russians: both have too much to gain by sticking together; the frictions which arise between them would develop practical significance only if they succeeded in driving the US out of Asia. Sinkiang is now filling up with Chinese, just as the Soviet republics directly across the frontier are becoming Russian in population. As for the credits extended to China, these could be increased without public announcement. It is not certain that we have anything to gain by the growth of a Chinese power which may be able one day to drag the whole Bloc into war against us.

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~~SECRET~~Is there a harder line in Soviet foreign policy?

9. A third matter to which the consultants devoted extended attention was the question of whether paragraph 11 of Chapter VI described a sufficiently sharp change in Soviet foreign policy. On this issue the consultants again divided into two groups: MOSELY, STRAYER and BLACK thought the language of paragraph 11 was not strong enough; LANGER and KENNAN disagreed.

LANGER thought Soviet policy over the last two years had been cautious. The Soviets undertake to negotiate at Geneva on the cessation of atomic testing and they probably desire a partial agreement. They want to stay alive as much as we do. They realize that the destruction of atomic warfare would be so immense that state interest dictates caution. We must not believe geochlossen that the Soviets are prepared to blow up the world.

10. KENNAN supported LANGER by asserting that Soviet policy was not adventuristic. At the height of the Suez crisis, when they were concerned about events in Hungary, the Soviets did remind the British and French that their countries were not invulnerable to missile attack. They have also told the Danes that if missile bases were placed on Danish soil, Denmark would find herself in the line of fire. But it may well be that these are facts. It may be that the Soviets would be remiss if they didn't say these things.

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11. Whether Berlin represents a new departure in Soviet foreign policy depends on one's estimate of Soviet motives. If Berlin is aimed at keeping nuclear weapons out of West German hands, LANGER suggested then Berlin is really a Soviet defensive action. We can't stay in Berlin for all eternity. The question is what settlement would be acceptable to us as well as to the Germans. It would be silly to underestimate the gravity with which the Soviet Union views West German rearmament.

12. KENNAN, on the other hand, was inclined to feel that the Soviet motives were internal to the Bloc. Realizing that the division of Europe is not to be overcome by negotiation, Moscow is concentrating on the consolidation of the Socialist camp. The great weakness here is the GDR. Communism cannot be a success where an alternative is available. Thus the attack on Berlin. This need for consolidation in eastern Europe has recently been accentuated by the miserable failure of Communism in Western Europe. The decline of Communist party prestige in the welfare states of the West has encouraged revisionism in the Satellites.

13. In answer to this line of argument, MOSELY, STRAYER, and BLACK asserted that the Soviet purpose in Berlin was not merely to consolidate the Bloc, but also to move forward. They want to break up

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NATO and get Germany out of it. They want to prove to the Germans that the French and British are not willing to take risks for Berlin. Their leaders will use threats more freely because this will help break up the alliance and also bring internal disunity. It is very difficult for the Western Allies to decide what to do and when to do it. In six months the Russians will have convinced the West Europeans that they don't want another air lift. They did not want negotiation on their November note; on the contrary, they hoped for an immediate refusal. The Soviets do not have to have a settlement in any particular place; what they want to do is to reduce Western ability to resist. In short, the level of risk which the Soviet leaders believe they can take is increasing steadily and rapidly, and paragraph 11 should say so. Moreover, the paper should have a section on the ultimate ideological goals of the Soviets, in which these goals should be stated in our language, together with an estimate of how far they think they have advanced toward their fulfillment.

Comments on the next World Situation Paper



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14. In the final hours of the sitting the consultants were asked to suggest the points which should be considered in the drafting of the estimate on the world situation. This request produced a wide-ranging

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discussion which, on the whole, was colored with a deep-going pessimism and which concentrated for the most part on the underdeveloped areas and their prospects for modernization.

15. It was agreed that 1958 had seen some improvement. The West had adroitly conducted successful holding operations in the Lebanon and at Quemoy. This, in KENNAN's view, had impressed Nasser. LANGER and LINDER pointed out that Nehru had recently come to realize that Moscow did not have the solution to the Indian problem. India must have outside help and only the West will proffer this in sufficient amounts.

16. This mild optimism was offset by ARMSTRONG's prediction that a new Middle Eastern crisis was on the way. This time over the question of the Arab refugees. One-third of the total population of the Fertile Crescent, and two-thirds of the population of Jordan, are Palestinian refugees. Present dispositions for caring for these refugees come to an end in 1960 and so far we have developed no policy for dealing with this situation. We have so tied ourselves to the Israelis that we are politically helpless. Our one prospect is to persuade the Israelis to make substantial concessions. YOUNG agreed.

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17. With regard to the outlook for the underdeveloped countries in general, KNORR raised the possibility that the rash of military dictatorships which had recently appeared is a sign of improvement. The new military rulers are relatively incorrupt and open to Westernization. They represent the emergence of a new middle class, which would be more resistant to Soviet penetration, and in fact the only feasible alternative to a Communist elite. The present Egyptian government is the best in modern times. BLACK was inclined to agree, while LANGER brought up the example of Ataturk and suggested that the new dictatorships might take his regime as a model.

18. LINDER, YOUNG, ARMSTRONG, and MOSELY were, however, not so sure. They saw no reason to assume that military elites were incorruptible or especially competent. Popular expectations in these countries are high, and if there is no immediate improvement in the local situation, the Communists will make a comeback. If the West does not intervene with massive assistance, the dictatorships will endure only briefly. Of themselves, they do not solve the real problem in these countries, which is the scarcity of trained manpower and skilled management. The Ataturk example is a poor one; Russia is the traditional enemy of the Turks, and the military does not have in other backward countries the prestige it carries in Turkey.

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19. LINDER and MOSELY went on to point out that the economic position of the underdeveloped areas has deteriorated in the last year. The prices of the basic commodities which are the principal exports of these areas have stabilized themselves at a pretty low level, but one which may be normal, after the artificial situation created by the Korean war. The political consequences of this decline in prices -- increased friction with the Western purchasers, greater instability of local governments -- will not be long in appearing. The underdeveloped countries have for years put pressure on the United States to enter into commodity agreements. Washington has always regarded such agreements as iniquitous (in those cases in which we are the purchasers) but as Chinese Communist trade cuts in more and more US policy may show greater flexibility.

20. In addition to the problem of commodity prices is the dilemma created by population growth, which tends to cancel out gains made in other fields. KENNAN assumed that there was no real chance of fulfilling the aspirations of underdeveloped areas. Foreign aid is simply a game we have to play in competition with the Russians, but we have no reason to hope that it will be successful.

21. LANGER asked whether the process of industrialization, which had already gone so far in the USSR, would not inevitably generate in

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the East the same pressures that had developed in and had liberalized the West? How long can the new social forces be kept in check? Junker Germany had had a strong Social Democratic movement and even the Soviets have some kind of representative system, phony perhaps, but necessary nevertheless. Ergo: representative democracy enjoys a certain natural advantage.

22. KENNAN thought there had, in fact, been changes in Soviet dynamics. Youth, once enthusiastic, is today inclined to be cynical and disillusioned. The sons of the most influential people are the rebels. "Is a society staple in which the second generation of its most influential elements is the least reliable?"

23. The opposing view was presented by MOSELY. Communist ideology is a hard shell within which great power nationalism bubbles. Psychic rewards are still important; the system channels and controls the expression of popular aspirations. The lack of ideological interest characteristic of some youth may make it easier to recruit and utilize types who are interested primarily in power and are prepared to work within the system without worrying about it.

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24. There was a final round of discussion on the subject of nuclear plenty. It was agreed that the Europeans seemed indifferent to the establishment of missile bases on their continent. The public is simply incapable of grasping the significance of the new weapons. To quote KENNAN: "The general reaction to the advance in nuclear weapons is one of apathy and fatalism."

The consultants were also in agreement that the existence of nuclear weapons had not much effect on government policy. If there were no nuclear weapons to pay for, Europe would now be maintaining large standing armies. The desire of small countries to possess these weapons is based partly on prestige, partly on disbelief that the United States will stand by them in time of need, and partly on failure to grasp the implications of the "second strike." If the Soviets are unwilling to talk about "third parties," it is because they are, much to their own embarrassment, not in a position to commit the Chinese.

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