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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

10 May 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 17-55

SUBJECT: Princeton Consultants Meetings of 28-29 April 1955

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman

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Consultants

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I. BANDUNG CONFERENCE

Consensus: While the strong anti-Communist stand made at Bandung by several of US allies was gratifying, Chou made the greatest gains by his soft talk. Several staunch anti-Communist leaders came away from the meeting convinced of Chou's desire to lessen tensions. Moreover, Chou's refusal to engage in debate obviated any peacemaking by Nehru. As a result, the latter gained little from the meeting and in fact probably lost stature as an Asian leader.

MILLIKAN: The West gained to the extent that the assurances Chou gave to the Asian countries will be hard to go back on. On the other hand, Chou's peace tactics are more difficult for the West to counter than aggressive military action. KNORR: Why was there surprise at Chou's action? It is probably apparent to the Chinese Communists that

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** 29 April only.

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much was to be gained at Bandung by adopting an attitude of "sweet reasonableness." HOOVER, with MILLIKAN agreeing: Chou's action was merely a tactic and not an indication that Communist China will eschew violence or will accept peaceful settlement of such a basic issue as control of Taiwan. In this tactic, Chou exploited the prestige which Communist China gained from Communist military victories in Korea and Indochina.

LANGER: Chou may also have adopted his soft approach because he believed the Indians were becoming disturbed by Chinese threats to resort to military action in the Taiwan straits. MOSLEY: Nehru is probably bitter about the "militaristic" policies of the West, particularly of the US, and is inclined to overlook Chinese truculence. SONTAG: India, under Nehru's leadership, will probably not oppose with force Chinese Communist advances short of its own border. The soft approach of the Chinese Communists at Bandung served to convince Nehru that his is the right course. MILLIKAN: India might be tough in a crisis and, for example, come to the aid of Burma. Moreover, the fact that India can turn to the West for help at any time, gives it a potential source of strength in its dealing with Communist China. LINCOLN: Nehru probably considers that the Asian problems are primarily political, and that the US has been too military in its approach.

II. ARE CHANGES IN SOVIET LEADERSHIP SIGNIFICANT IN RELATION TO POLICY CHANGES?

MOSLEY: While there is no solid evidence, it is probably fallacious to associate specific Soviet policies with particular leaders. In fact, as in any government, disputes among top rank leaders must take place constantly. LINDER: Perhaps, on occasion, a policy issue is used as a pretext to rationalize the action of a successful power-seeker.

STRAYER and HOOVER: There exists in fact a direct association between certain leaders and certain Soviet policies. LANGER: We should not draw sharp distinction between a struggle for power and policy disputes because both are probably always involved. On the other hand, with the exception of Germany and China policies, there are probably no serious differences on the basic principles which underlie policy. MILLIKAN: Moreover, the relative importance of differences regarding policy has probably increased since the death of Stalin.

Consensus: In general, the Soviet government currently appears to have greater flexibility in operation than during Stalin's era. In part this is probably a manifestation of collective decision-taking in the absence of a single person who has the ultimate power of decision.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~SECRET~~III. COMPOSITION OF LEADERSHIP AND ROLE PLAYED BY THE MILITARY

MOSLEY: There is nothing to indicate any real conflict between the old Bolsheviks and the younger leaders from the professional managers group. The latter have been trained by the former and while they are now coming into policy roles, they are still under the guidance of older hands.

SONTAG: The Army may be a real source of difficulty for Soviet leaders, particularly if the historical analogy of the Prussian officer corps applies. The loyalty of the Prussian officer was to his own corps, to its code and to its leaders. MOSLEY: Disagreed. Loyalty to corps or to person does not supersede loyalty of the Soviet army to the government. The Party has control of selection and promotion of officers. The Army has remained aloof from internal party and leader conflicts. Even Bulganin, if he gets into difficulties, could not move a "corporal's guard" for political purposes. HOOVER: While this may be so, the Army may now be exerting its power in a subtle way rather than seeking to seize power overtly.

IV. SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

SONTAG, with HOOVER concurring: The categorization of the Sino-Soviet relationship as an alliance wrongly implies the existence of a relationship similar to that between the US and the UK, including the supposition that one partner might easily leave the other. LINCOLN: The possibility of a split between the Soviet Union and Communist China cannot be excluded for the middle and long term. For example, the Chinese may eventually attempt to alleviate population pressure by expanding North and West as they have done before. LANGER: The Chinese have not forgotten their historical conflicts with the Russians and the fact that the Chinese once controlled the Maritime provinces.

The majority of the Consultants seemed to agree that "alliance" probably was a proper word for the Sino-Soviet relationship, particularly since, in their view, common interests are more important than ideology in binding the two countries together. MILLIKAN, MOSLEY, and HOOVER: The presuppositions, the tactical and strategic concepts, and the totalitarian control of society developed from the Communist ideology are more important than the ideology itself. STRAYER: The bond of ideology would have strength only so long as the national interests of the Soviet Union and Communist China did not become too divergent.

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In general, the Consultants agreed that the Soviet action was designed, in large measure, to slow down or temporarily to halt German rearmament. There was agreement that Soviet withdrawal from Austria did not represent a costly retreat by the Soviets. **MOSLEY:** The Soviets acted precipitously as a result of French agreeing to German rearmament. The Austrian agreement indicates to the Germans that they could do better through direct negotiation with the Soviets. The Soviets probably believe that by appearing to be willing to negotiate they can delay rearmament for a couple of years, during which time there would always be hope for a favorable change in the situation. For example, a Socialist government might come to power and seek to negotiate with the Soviets.

On the other hand, there was general agreement that the Soviet Union would not agree to a similar withdrawal from East Germany. **KNORR** and **MOSLEY:** The possibility exists that the Soviets might accept the risk and agree to the withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany and to German self-reunification, believing that the West would not accept such a proposal and would fear the onus for blocking German reunification. **SONTAG:** The Soviets would never seriously propose or accept any proposal which called for unification on the basis of neutralization because they realize that any major country, and particularly Germany, could not be kept in such a position. Furthermore, Soviet leaders must realize that before World War II Soviet growth was blocked by Germany and, to a lesser extent, by Japan. Therefore, the Soviets will never accept a policy which creates once again an armed, unified Germany. **STRAYER:** It is possible, however, that the development of new weapons may render invalid the concept of buffer states.

The Consultants agreed generally that Soviet action with respect to Austria probably resulted in part from Soviet fear that war will develop between Communist China and the US. The Soviets desire to stay out of such hostilities and at the same time to appear as a "peace-loving" country to the European allies of the US, in anticipation of the weakening of NATO in these circumstances. **MOSLEY:** The Soviets might hope that in such a situation US allies in Europe, in seeking to disassociate themselves from the war in the Far East, might request withdrawal of US forces from bases in Europe. **LANGER:** The Russian action should perhaps be conceived of as a pledge of "peaceful" intentions on the part of the USSR. **HOOVER:** By the Austrian move, the Soviets gained greater flexibility should hostilities begin in the Far East -- the Soviet Union could stand aside as a third party or intervene as it chooses. **MOSLEY:** Moreover, the Soviets might not oppose a war in the Far East between Communist China and the US if they were convinced it could be kept localized, believing they would gain to the extent that

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Chinese dependence on the Soviet Union for supplies increased and that US relations with its European allies were weakened.

The Consultants did not seem to accept as a third possibility that the Soviet action was part of a general Communist policy directed to a world-wide detente. LANGER: While he believed this was a possibility that should be considered, he believed such was probably not the case. The Soviets might take this course of action because they found the increasing cost of the armaments race too great a burden, because they feared that the US would retaliate against the USSR should hostilities begin anywhere in the world, and because internally, they were somewhat disorganized by the death of Stalin and had not fully worked out a replacement organization. SONFAG: It was dangerous to pursue this line of reasoning. Why should the Communists quit and seek a detente when in fact the situation in the non-Communist world is rotten?

VI. SOVIET ECONOMIC SITUATION

HOOVER: The economic situation, particularly with respect to agriculture, is actually worse than the Soviet estimate indicated. While there is probably no actual starvation in the Soviet Union, food is hard to get. However, this economic weakness is not likely to force the Soviet leaders to seek a detente or to adopt a "friendly" foreign policy.

KNORR: The Soviet agricultural situation is not at a crisis stage but is rather a long term problem. The principal components of the agricultural problem are: the relatively poor location of the bulk of arable land (north of 40 parallel - LINCOLN); inability to maximize the peasant contribution; and insufficient availability of resources for investment in this sector of the economy. In the long run, unless the agricultural problem is overcome the Soviets will not achieve their goals and the Soviet leaders will be faced with increasingly difficult choices as defense costs increase, consumer demand grows, and the need for investment remains high. LANGER: Tended to agree with longer term concept. The Soviets are planners and consider possible shortages in terms of the effect on other programs. Thus agricultural shortfalls must be considered with the increasing cost of arms and the possibility of war-demands from Communist China. They are aware that in a peaceful period they would have more resources available to further their planned development; however, there are no signs that they are about to act on this assumption.

VII. FUTURE WAR: SOVIET CALCULATION OF RISKS AND POSSIBILITY OF LOCALIZING WARS

The Consultants appeared to agree that both the Soviet Union and the US will seek to avoid major war in the future because the destructiveness

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of new weapons renders a "profitable" victory impossible. However, there was not agreement concerning the possibility of keeping local wars local or the possibility that local wars will occur in the future.

REITZEL: While general war would be avoided because of the balance of force, local aggressions, in which conventional weapons alone would be used, will probably occur. LANGER: The Soviets do not seek major war. However, the principal deterrent is not a balance of forces but the fact that the US, at least for a certain future period, will have superior nuclear capabilities. Should the US employ tactical nuclear weapons in a local war, Soviets might estimate they would shortly become a target. In such a situation, the Soviets might decide not to sit and wait for the blow but would launch a surprise attack against the US. LANGER, MOSLEY, and KNORR: Such wars would be limited to the Far East because a war in Europe could not avoid the inclusion of major powers and the use of all weapons. MOSLEY: The Soviet Union would be cautious and would always calculate the possibility of quick victory against the chances that a local war could be kept localized. HOOVER: There still exists grave danger that general war could occur because even the horror of general nuclear war might not prove to be sufficient to keep a local war local. LINCOLN: Maybe the question of whether limited war will occur is not the right one. Perhaps it is more likely that countries will bring pressure on political negotiations by flexing their muscles rather than seeking to prove their strength in a power contest.

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