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THE RECENT SOVIET POLITICAL OFFENSIVE

Note by the Chairman of the Committee of Political Advisers

At the request of the Committee of Political Advisers the Political Division prepared a study on "The Recent Soviet Political Offensive", which was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 11th June, 1957.

2. The Committee agreed that a revised version of the staff study, amended in the light of comments made by members of the Committee, should be submitted to the Council as soon as possible. Accordingly, the attached text is presented as a basis of discussion in the Council.

3. In agreement with the Secretary General this paper will be listed on the Agenda for the Council's meeting on 26th June, 1957.

(Signed) A. CASARDI.

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIe.

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THE RECENT SOVIET POLITICAL OFFENSIVE

Report prepared by the Political Division

GENERAL

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On 15th April, 1957, a report on "The Recent Soviet Campaign of Threats", prepared by the Political Division, was distributed as Council document C-M(57)58. As a sequel to that paper, the present report on "The Recent Soviet Political Offensive" has been prepared to cover the wider field suggested by the Committee of Political Advisers at its meeting on 21st May.

2. In the autumn of 1956 events in Hungary and elsewhere exploded the campaign of "peaceful co-existence" which had registered certain gains for Soviet policy. In recent months the Soviets have initiated and accelerated an energetic offensive to regain the initiative in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere, including the disarmament front. The NATO area and the NATO Alliance are the central targets of this Soviet policy drive, but the campaign is now more frontal than in 1956, when Soviet penetration into the Middle East, during Shepilov's tenure of the Foreign Ministry, found itself moving into an area of considerable risk. This new drive mingles bluster and blandishments. (A summary of the principal themes of recent Soviet declarations is contained in Annex A). Co-existence and friendly relations are re-emphasised, pressure to induce resumption of high-level talks with the Western Powers is applied, and the Soviet Union again appears under the mantle of the peace lover ardently preaching the virtues of the renunciation of force, of the construction of new security arrangements for Europe, and of disarmament. These are themes calculated to have an effect on a Western public opinion which ardently desires peace and whose fears of atomic warfare and of the possible consequences of testing nuclear weapons are also exploited by Soviet menaces of atomic retribution, accompanied by timely reminders that the Soviet Union is carrying out extensive nuclear tests of its own.

3. The detailed development of this campaign is set forth in a chronology at Annex B. The highlights of the campaign were successively: the messages addressed to the Norwegian and Danish Prime Ministers, those addressed to the British Prime Minister, to the German Federal Republic and, more recently, to the French Prime Minister. As far as the United States is concerned, the Khrushchev interview with Mr. Turner Catledge of the New York Times, and his subsequent appearance on television, received prominence. Although there is some evidence that the length of many of these messages, and the rapid succession of largely repetitious arguments have induced flagging interest on the part of Western newspapers, the Soviet campaign shows no sign of a let-up and is a factor which will probably have to be reckoned with for a long time to come. (A listing of Western replies to Soviet pronouncements is contained in Annex C).

4. Apart from the initial and fairly obvious motive of seeking to hold up the equipment with atomic weapons of NATO forces in Europe, the Soviet campaign aims at reaping wider dividends by exploiting widespread fears of atomic war. They can hope to exploit this not only in putting forward their disarmament proposals but also in creating public pressures on Western governments for bilateral

high-level talks with the Soviet leaders. In this way they hope to cover up the iniquities of their policies in Eastern Europe and to build up their prestige as partisans of peace and as reasonable men ready for genuine discussions of problems of security and of the perils arising from nuclear tests and nuclear warfare.

5. The fact that the Soviet leaders are once again hewing back to the line of the original co-existence campaign suggests that the reasons which led them to adopt it in the first instance are at least as strong as before: since the West confronts Soviet Russia with the nuclear deterrent, the co-existence campaign offers a specious and inexpensive means of sapping the foundations of Western resolution and unity. The fact that the events in Hungary brought the NATO Powers closer together and that events in the Middle East resulted in increasingly evident United States power and influence in the area, underline the Soviet need for a counter-campaign to regain the initiative. The extensive and important re-organization scheme for the Soviet industrial management system suggests that the leaders can hardly have any very lively fears of Western aggression in the near future, despite their campaign against the equipment of NATO forces in Europe with atomic weapons. They may feel, however, that this development may increase the hazards for them in the event of future disturbances or tensions along and within the Iron Curtain.

6. With the co-existence policy the Soviet leaders can hope not only to bring about a general relaxation of effort in the West but also to probe for opportunities of driving wedges in Western unity. The attempt to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies is evident not only in the sustained attacks on United States policy in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, but even in the content of the Khrushchev interview with Mr. Turner Catledge, ostensibly made to enhance friendly relations and addressed to an American audience. In spite of these attacks on United States policy (which were less evident in the Khrushchev television interview), the Soviet leaders are clearly angling and manoeuvring for the resumption of talks with the West. This time the emphasis is definitely on bilateral talks. The more talk there is of some sort of talks with the West, the more they can hope to seize the diplomatic initiative, to engender uncertainty and possibly suspicions and confusion among their opponents, and to do all this without incurring any such risks as those which loomed up when their penetration in the Middle East by arms deals and other methods produced unforeseen consequences.

7. During the campaign to intimidate NATO powers and to prevent the United States from supplying atomic weapons or stationing units equipped with atomic weapons on the territory of its allies, the Soviet leaders also intensified the propaganda campaign for ending tests of nuclear weapons. The timing of this campaign indicates that the Soviet leaders sought to create embarrassments for Britain, but they also undoubtedly had in mind the unwelcome possibility of the emergence of a "nuclear fourth power". The fact that this campaign was accompanied by an extensive series of Soviet tests in April showed the complete contempt of the Soviet leaders for moral consistency. They did not announce these tests to the Soviet people and, being determined to carry out their own nuclear programme, they may have calculated that the intimidating effect would give a net balance of advantage. By this two-faced manoeuvre, they may have hoped simultaneously to reassure the Russian people of their peaceful desires, while exploiting the element of fear vis-à-vis the Western public.

8. On 30th April, 1957, the Russian Representative to the Sub-Committee on Disarmament tabled lengthy new proposals. However these proposals may be assessed, they clearly represent another Soviet move to regain the diplomatic initiative. On the other diplomatic and political fronts the Soviet offensive offers no concessions and is devoid of novelty in respect of any positive proposals on substantive problems. The Soviet exchange of letters with the Federal German Republic shows no modification in the uncompromising Russian position on German reunification. They want a trade agreement with the Federal Republic and they have emphasised their professed desire for improved Soviet-German relations notably by the publication on 10th April of an article on "The Spirit of Rapallo" in the official publication of the Soviet Embassy at Bonn. Nevertheless in the Bulganin note to the British Prime Minister and in statements made by Mikoyan during his visit to Austria, the Russian leaders have harked back to earlier Western plans for a zone of demilitarisation in Europe. The threatening note of 27th April sent to the Federal Government was timed to take advantage of the Göttingen manifesto by West German scientists and was calculated to make German rearmament and membership of NATO sharper issues in the election campaign.

9. The Mikoyan visit to Austria led to a reaffirmation by the Austrian leaders of their desire to maintain Austrian neutrality. Apart from a reference to the unfriendly attitude of the Austrian Government in expelling the World Peace Council, Mikoyan was assiduous in building up as cordial an atmosphere in Soviet-Austrian relations as could be expected in view of the memories of Russian action in Hungary. He was ardent in singing the praises, both privately and publicly, of the merits of a world of co-existence. The visit thus served the purpose of advertising co-existence, even though its possible benefits in the shape of relief for Austria from some of the heavier economic obligations of the State Treaty have yet to materialise. Visits of Austrian leaders to Moscow are now in prospect.

10. In Scandinavia, the benefits of co-existence are a favourite theme for Soviet propaganda. Much prominence was given to Soviet-Finnish friendship in a build-up for the June visit to Finland of Soviet leaders. This, however, did not inhibit the Soviet press from meddling in Finnish internal affairs by printing comment to the effect that the election of Tanner as leader of the Finnish Socialist Party would prejudice Finno-Soviet relations. The roseate projection of a co-existence future has been somewhat marred as far as Sweden is concerned by her uncovering of Soviet espionage and as far as Norway and Denmark are concerned by the natural national reaction to the menaces contained in the Soviet Notes.

11. The co-existence theme has not been wanting in the Soviet attitude towards Turkey, for at the time of the arrival of the new Soviet Ambassador to Turkey articles flowed from the Soviet press emphasising the advantages of the improvement which could be made in Soviet-Turkish relations.

THE MIDDLE EAST

12. There have been concrete developments in Soviet relations with Iran. The Soviet-Iranian frontier protocol was signed in Teheran on 11th April. An agreement has also been signed permitting the transit of goods through Russian and Persian territory duty free and on 16th April a three-year trade agreement was concluded. There

is also in prospect a possible agreement for airline services between Tiflis and Teheran.

13. Soviet policy towards the Arab world has two main aspects. One is the continued campaign directed against the Eisenhower doctrine and the mission of Ambassador Richards. The second is the renewed attempt to stake a claim to share in consultations on Middle East problems. A major objective of Soviet policy is to obtain recognition by the West of this claim. The original call for a broad declaration of principles was replaced by a new Soviet Note which pressed for a simple agreement to make a Four-Power declaration condemning the use of force for the settlement of Middle Eastern problems. These manoeuvres suggest that the Western Powers are being invited to commit themselves to start talks or negotiations on the Middle East in which they would find plenty of discussion but nothing of substance. The longer such talks continued and the more obviously abortive they became, the more confused and frustrated would be the atmosphere generated in the Middle East. Such an atmosphere would serve to keep the pot boiling to the disadvantage of Western interests in the area. The mirage of a possible "Palais Rose" discussion on the Middle East would thus offer major advantages and hardly any risk for Soviet policy - and the leaders are not unmindful of the risks entailed in the recent phase of Soviet policy in the Middle East.

14. In the United Nations Security Council debate on Suez on 28th April, the Soviet delegate described the Canal issue as "settled" by the unilateral Egyptian Declaration. Earlier Soviet concentration on such questions as the position of Gaza and the Straits of Tiran was switched to Jordan when the crisis broke out there. In an official statement issued on 29th April, the Soviet Foreign Ministry, while conceding that the internal changes in Jordan concerned the Jordanians alone, was at pains to pin responsibility for the crisis on the Western Powers and particularly the United States. In reaffirming full support for Arab aspirations the Soviet Government is once again careful to avoid making any specific commitment. This caution constrained the Soviet leaders to general statements about being unable to ignore the situation, about the Soviet Union's interest in peace in the Middle East and of how the responsibility would rest elsewhere if dangerous consequences ensued from the situation. The Tass statement of 26th May on Jordan follows this same general line.

THE FAR EAST

15. Apart from Japan, Asia seems to have had less than its fair share of Soviet attentions. The visit of Marshal Voroshilov to Indonesia was given all the publicity which the Soviet machine could generate but the Marshal does not make headlines so easily as Mr. Khrushchev.

16. Moscow has given much publicity to the second anniversary of the Bandung meeting with emphasis on the progress made in Afro-Asian solidarity and the success it has won since Bandung. Tass has announced that the Communist-dominated Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee is preparing for an unofficial conference in Cairo in October.

17. Japan, where the public is very concerned about atomic testing, has had a full dose of the Soviet line that it would much prefer to halt tests if only the Western Powers would agree. Making agreement, the Soviets say that they must continue their programme, which, however, endangers no one.

THE COMMUNIST WORLD

18. The first formal visit to Moscow of Albanian leaders round off consultations which Moscow has been holding with the Satellite leaders since January. Hitherto, Albania has not been much in evidence in Bloc activities and arrangements, although a member of the Warsaw Pact. This is principally because of Albania's exposed position but may also have been partly out of regard for Tito. The final communiqué professed a desire to improve relations with Yugoslavia as well as to bring about better Albanian relations with Greece and Italy (not, however, omitting an attack on the Balkan pact). There was no further reference to the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia and its alleged ill-treatment, but this, and the references to friendship could hardly disguise the fact that the Albanian leaders' visit to Moscow would underline the virtual quarantine applied to Tito. The Soviet leaders are nevertheless interested in seeing that a damper is applied to Yugoslav ardour on ideological questions, and have accordingly of late shown considerable restraint in their comments. They now seem to be receiving a favourable response from Tito, who (possible with an eye to getting Mao-tse-Tung to visit Belgrade) seeks to patch up relations to improve his standing in the Communist World.

19. The invitation extended to the United Nations Secretary General to visit Hungary at a time of his own choosing is pointedly forced from the requests made by the Secretary General arising from the General Assembly resolutions on Hungary. The fact that the invitation has now been made suggests that the Soviet leaders and their Hungarian puppets have growing confidence in the firmness of their grip on Hungary, although the situation there must still present them with cause for concern.

20. On 27th May, the USSR and Hungary signed an agreement on the stationing of Soviet forces in Hungary. Their stationing was stated to be expedient "in the prevailing international situation when there exists an aggressive North Atlantic Bloc, when Western Germany is being militarised and revenge-seeking forces in it are increasing their activity, when the United States and other participants of the North Atlantic Bloc maintain their numerous troops and military bases near capitalist States..."

21. The Soviet Government had earlier signed an agreement with Rumania on the stationing of Soviet troops there. The Rumanians did not obtain all of the concessions granted to the Poles but they obtained a good deal more than was conceded to the East Germans.

22. It will be recalled that the Soviet Declaration of 14th October, 1956 on relations with the Satellites indicated three fields in which limited concessions might be made to the Satellites. The agreements on stationing of Soviet forces and the various economic concessions announced in recent months reflect the follow-up of Soviet policy in two of these fields. The third field - that of arrangements concerning Soviet experts and advisers - has now been entered with the announced Bulgarian-Soviet agreement on exchange and training of experts.

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According to the announcement the cost to Bulgaria of Soviet experts and Soviet training facilities will now be much reduced.

MISCELLANEOUS

23. Among the Soviet internal developments which may relate to the co-existence theme are the setting up, announced on 22nd May, 1957, of a State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (and also to help foreign correspondents in Moscow); the promise that Soviet citizens will be afforded a larger number of organized tours than hitherto, although chiefly to Soviet Bloc countries; and a choice of Lenin prize-winners which suggests some attempt to reward genuine talent as well as to maintain conformism in the cultural field. On 30th March, the effective exchange rate of the Rouble was sharply revised, thus making the Soviet Union a less expensive place for visitors and diplomatic missions.

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PRINCIPAL THEMES OF RECENT SOVIET DECLARATIONS

GENERAL

Of the various statements issued from Moscow in April and May, only the letters to Messrs. Macmillan and Mollet contained a reasonably complete tour d'horizon. Other moves, such as the notes to the three Western Powers of 19th April or the note to the Federal Republic of 27th April, were focused on specific questions (the Middle East, and nuclear weapons in Germany in these two instances).

On the basis of these two wide-ranging letters and the other narrower declarations, the Soviet line on various issues is summed up in the following paragraphs.

DISARMAMENT

Prior to 30th April, the Soviets emphasised their proposals of 18th March. (The letter to Mr. Macmillan, despatched while new Soviet proposals were under preparation, had no specific reference.) Since 30th April, e.g. in the letter to Mr. Mollet, the Soviets have urged that their latest proposals be accepted as a basis for negotiating a partial disarmament agreement. In addition, all Soviet media for some months have been giving great prominence to the Soviet demand for a halt, at least temporary, to all nuclear testing, (letter to Messrs. Macmillan and Mollet, Soviet notes to Japan, Supreme Soviet appeal to United States Congress and United Kingdom Parliament, etc.).

EUROPEAN SECURITY

There are continuing references to the need for a system of collective security in Europe, but no new substantive proposals. Old suggestions, such as a non-aggression treaty between NATO and Warsaw Pact powers, are regularly trotted out, (letter to Mr. Mollet). In the context of European security, approval is given to some aspects of the Geneva proposals of Sir Anthony Eden regarding demilitarised zones and areas with restrictions on armaments in Central Europe (letter to Mr. Macmillan).

Khrushchev's suggestion, in his television interview on 28th May, that Soviet troops in Eastern Europe might be withdrawn in return for the withdrawal of American and other forces in Western Europe, hardly amounts to a new proposal. He sought to confuse Western opinion by securing wide publicity for an old Soviet line designed to promote the primary objective of the withdrawal of American forces and the disruption of NATO. In so doing he dismissed the questions of inspection and control of the withdrawals as of little significance and ignored the essential connexion of troop withdrawals with the problems of disarmament and German reunification.

GERMAN REUNIFICATION

The matter is not raised except in the note to the Federal Republic and in the Khrushchev-Catledge interview (in answering a question as to what a Summit Meeting might discuss). The Soviet position remains that "the question can be solved only when Adenauer meets with Grotewohl." Any Western policy which the USSR dislikes is cited as another obstacle to reunification.

INEX A to
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OTHER EUROPEAN PROBLEMS

The danger of nuclear weapons disposed around the Soviet perimeter is a favourite subject for the Soviet leaders. It was the principal theme of the campaign of threats launched in January. It remained prominent in the letter to Mr. Macmillan and the note to the Federal Republic of 27th April was built around it. It receives a place, though a less prominent one, in the letter to Mr. Mollet.

The Soviet opposition to Euratom and the Common Market are reiterated in the letter to Mr. Mollet. Soviet counter-proposals are along the lines of those which were rejected at the ECE meeting recently.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The Soviet proposals of 11th February, in spite of their rejection by the three Western Powers, are put forward again as recently as the letter to Mr. Mollet. Meanwhile, in a renewed attempt to gain the major objective of a voice in consultations on the Middle East, the Soviets advanced a proposal for a simple Four-power Declaration condemning the use of force in the area in notes sent on 19th April. The letters to Messrs. Macmillan and Mollet regret British and French attitudes toward the area's problems and state how much better it would be if Soviet advice were followed. The publication of the Bulganin-Eden-Mollet correspondence from last year seems aimed primarily at Arab audiences. The Foreign Ministry Declaration of 29th April is, of course, highly critical of American policy. Mr. Bulganin's letters reiterate his comprehension of how important to the United Kingdom and France are their economic interests in the Middle East, a comprehension ironically offset by the expressed complete approval for Nasser's position threatening these interests.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

The letters to Messrs. Macmillan and Mollet, like earlier letters to various leaders, take up certain bilateral questions. There are the usual professions of desire for greater trade if discriminatory restrictions (read COCOM) could be abolished. Increased trade has been a prominent theme in Soviet approaches to the Federal Republic. The USSR has also reiterated its desire for increased cultural contacts, especially exchanges in the scientific and technical field.

The desire for bilateral dealings on political questions, implicit in all Soviet approaches to the West, received explicit statement in the suggestion to Mr. Mollet that French-Soviet talks on European security should be undertaken. The notion that the United States and the USSR should settle all important questions between them was a feature of the Khrushchev-Catledge interview.

MISCELLANEOUS

Some minor points of difference between the letters to Norway and Denmark and later correspondence are of interest. The firmness of the Scandinavian replies has apparently caused mention of the "fascist intrigue" in Hungary to be dropped. Similarly, the repeated assertions in more recent letters that "this is not a great" are clearly designed to reduce the hostility generated by vivid descriptions of the destruction Soviet nuclear weapons could use. The egregious mention of Algeria in the letter to Mr. Mollet corresponds to nothing in the other letters and is presumably directed at the Arab audience.

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CHRONOLOGY OF SOVIET POLITICAL OFFENSIVE

(March-May 1957)

- March
 - 16 - Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on Euratom and the Common Market (published immediately)
 - 18 - Soviet Disarmament proposals (published immediately)
 - 18 - Bulganin letter to Dr. Adenauer (published 24th March with a mention but no text of the Chancellor's letter of 27th February).
 - 19 - Bulganin letter to Mr. Gerhardsen (actually delivered 21st March and published 27th March)
 - 28 - Bulganin letter to Mr. Hansen (actually delivered 29th March and published 31st March)
 - 29 - Soviet note to Japan on tests (published 2nd April with text of Japanese note of 9th March)
- April
 - 1 - Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on Bermuda talks (published immediately)
 - (5-18 - Five nuclear tests in the USSR, not announced in Soviet press)
 - 8 - Soviet note to United States on Panama Canal (published immediately)
 - 19 - Notes to Three Western Powers on Middle East (published immediately)
 - 20 - Bulganin letter to Mr. Macmillan (published 24th April)
 - 23 - Release of earlier Bulganin correspondence with Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Mollet
 - 25 - Tass statement on Mr. Dulles' AP speech
 - 27 - Mikoyan visit to Austria (communiqué and press conference)
 - 27 - Soviet note to Federal Republic on nuclear weapons (published immediately)
 - 29 - Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on Middle East (published immediately)
 - 30 - Soviet Disarmament proposals (published immediately)
- May
 - 4 - Smirnov's reply to Chancellor Adenauer published
 - 4 - Soviet Red Cross message to Japanese Red Cross on nuclear tests (published immediately)

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- May 7 - Bulganin letter to Secretary of Japanese Peace Committee on tests (published 10th May)
- 8-20 - Voroshilov in Indonesia
- 9 - Soviet aide-memoire to Japan on tests (published 12th May)
- 10 - Gromyko addresses Supreme Soviet on Disarmament
- 10 - Supreme Soviet appeal to Congress and Parliament on tests
- 10 - Khrushchev-Catledge interview (published in USSR 14th May)
- 20 - Bulganin letter to Mr. Mollet (published immediately)
- 22 - Soviet aide-memoire to Japan on tests (published immediately together with Japanese aide-memoire of 10th May)
- 26 - Tass statement on Jordan
- 28 - Khrushchev television interview (shown in the United States 2nd June, printed in Soviet press 4th June).
- June 6-13 - Khrushchev and Bulganin visit to Finland

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WESTERN REPLIES TO SOVIET PRONOUNCEMENTS

- April 13 - Mr. Gerhardsen's answer to Mr. Bulganin's letter delivered. Printed in full in Pravda 16th April.
- 13 - Dr. Adenauer's letter to Mr. Bulganin on repatriation, et al. Printed in full in Pravda 22nd April together with the German note on trade negotiations.
- 29 - Mr. Hansen's answer to Mr. Bulganin delivered. Printed in full in Pravda 4th May.
- 29 - First notes of the Six Powers in reply to the Soviet statement of 16th March on Euratom and the Common Market. Not printed in the Soviet press.
- May 23 - Federal Republic's reply to Soviet note of 27th April on nuclear weapons delivered.
- 24 - Federal Republic's reply to Soviet note of 22nd October on reunification delivered.
- June 11 - Replies of Three Powers on Middle East delivered.
- Mid-June - Reply of Mr. Macmillan to Mr. Bulganin.

Some unanswered communications

Note to United States on Panama Canal - 8th April
Supreme Soviet appeal on tests - 10th May
Letter to Mr. Mollet - 20th May