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W12STATUS OF THE U.S.S.R. ATOMIC ENERGY PROJECT - 1 July 1949

The Joint Nuclear Energy Intelligence Committee makes the following estimate of the status of the U.S.S.R. Atomic Energy Project:

(1) In the 1 January 1949 report it was stated that the earliest possible date by which the U.S.S.R. might be expected to produce an atomic bomb was mid-1950, and the most probable date was mid-1953. The information now available substantiates these dates in general, although new information indicating one method which the Soviets are following suggests that their first atomic bomb cannot be completed before mid-1951.

(2) Based on evidence that the Soviet effort is directed toward producing a plutonium bomb, on current estimates of the amount of uranium available, and on the assumption that their plants will operate at reasonable efficiency, the maximum number of atomic bombs the Soviets could stockpile after a mid-1953 initial date is 60 by mid-1955 and 150 by mid-1957, by which time it is estimated that currently known uranium sources would be exhausted. The maximum number of atomic bombs the Soviets could stockpile after a mid-1950 initial date is 130 by mid-1955 and 150 by mid-1957.

It must be emphasized that estimates of bomb stockpiles depend very strongly on the amount of uranium ore available to the U.S.S.R. If the current ore estimates are revised, the bomb stockpile will be changed correspondingly. It is anticipated that various low-grade sources of uranium may be developed within the U.S.S.R., but it is impossible to estimate whether, or on what scale, such a development program will be carried out.

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