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PROBABLE SINO-SOVIET REACTIONS TO US DEPLOYMENT OF IRBMs ON THE SOVIET BLOC PERIPHERY

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 15 April 1958. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; and the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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10/9/73

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PROBABLE SINO-SOVIET REACTIONS TO US DEPLOYMENT OF IRBMs ON THE SOVIET BLOC PERIPHERY

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the Sino-Soviet reaction to anticipated and actual US deployment of IRBMs to various areas around the Bloc periphery during the next two or three years.

SCOPE

For purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that IRBMs will be deployed, either under sole US or shared control, initially in the UK and then elsewhere in the NATO area, including France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and perhaps West Germany. The effect of possible deployments to certain Middle and Far Eastern countries (for example, Iran, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines) is also considered. The magnitude of initial deployment is assumed to be four missile battalions of 15 weapons each to the UK and six to ten additional battalions elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that the Bloc leaders would regard US deployment of IRBMs assumed in this estimate as a substantial addition to Western capabilities. But they are unlikely to conclude either that this action indicates a change in US intentions or would basically alter the relative military strength of East and West.
2. Thus we believe that the Bloc, while taking vigorous diplomatic and propaganda measures aimed at preventing or delaying these deployments, and making them politically costly, would not resort to the use of force to do so.

DISCUSSION

Bloc Appraisal of US Intentions

3. The Soviet leaders have almost certainly long foreseen deployment of IRBMs around the Bloc periphery. They probably interpret the vigor with which

the US is now pressing this program as an effort to offset Soviet ICBM capabilities during the interim before American ICBMs become available in quantity. They probably also see in it an effort to bolster the capabilities of NATO in order

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to reduce pressures within some European countries for accommodation or tendencies toward neutralism. Further, they probably look upon the IRBM program as indicating that the US intends to continue to refuse disarmament on Soviet terms and is maintaining its efforts to deal with the USSR from a position of strength.

4. Despite Soviet apprehension over IRBM deployments, we do not believe that the Soviet leaders will interpret them as involving so radical a change in US intentions or in the East-West balance of military power as to require a major shift in Soviet policy. They will be mindful in this connection of their own present deterrent power, and, if our estimates of their ICBM progress are correct, they will calculate that their own ICBM capabilities will have reached considerable proportions by the time a substantial IRBM threat to them develops. They are unlikely to conclude that the US would subsequently pursue more aggressive courses of action or initiate general war. Moreover, they will reckon that, even if the assumed IRBM deployment did not occur, a similar threat would later develop from naval-launched IRBMs and US-based ICBMs. In the light of this appraisal, and because of continued Soviet respect for existing US deterrent power, we believe that the USSR would not attempt to prevent IRBM deployments by such risky measures as the use of force.

Bloc Appraisal of Military and Political Consequences

5. Nevertheless, the Soviets have already given ample evidence of their concern over prospective US deployment of IRBMs around the periphery of the Bloc. Mili-

tarly, the Soviets would regard successful US deployment of IRBMs as a substantial addition to Western nuclear delivery capabilities (see map for IRBM coverage of the Bloc from twelve selected countries), even though it did not basically alter the relative strength of East and West. Deployment to the UK alone would bring within missile range the USSR's two largest cities, many other important centers, and many of the home bases of Soviet Long Range Aviation. Deployment to other NATO countries, particularly Greece and Turkey, would considerably expand this coverage. If IRBMs were deployed to certain Middle and Far Eastern states as well, all Sino-Soviet Bloc territory would be brought within range save a large but sparsely populated area of the central USSR (see map). Soviet planners would recognize that each additional deployment, even if it largely duplicated previous coverage, would complicate their defensive problems. Among other things IRBM deployment would put greater urgency behind the requirement for an anti-missile capability.

6. In our view the Soviets are also concerned over the political impact of IRBM deployment on NATO and possibly other US alliances. The Soviet leaders probably fear that IRBM deployment, by strengthening deterrent capabilities in Western Europe, will make Western Europe less vulnerable to military fears and therefore less susceptible to political and psychological efforts designed to play on their anxieties. The Soviets might also estimate that, in the long run, IRBMs in the territories of US allies would probably come, in fact, under the sole control of the recipient countries. For this reason they might look upon the initial US

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IRBM deployment as marking an important step toward growth of an independent European nuclear capability. The achievement of such a capability would, in their view, further reduce Western European susceptibility to Soviet threats and would increase the number of countries able to trigger a nuclear war.

7. The USSR would recognize that even under conditions of US control the decreased warning time available in the case of missile attacks and the consequent pressures for quick reaction create an inherently greater risk of misinterpretation of warning signs resulting in a decision to counter-attack. Thus they will foresee an increase in the risks of war by miscalculation. In addition, if other countries obtained an independent missile capability, the Soviets would foresee a further increase in these risks. However, we believe that the USSR would regard these risks as unavoidable and would rely on its own deterrent capabilities to enforce caution on the West. The same factors would probably also act to induce caution on the part of the USSR.

8. We believe that Peiping would also be seriously concerned over the consequences of US deployment of IRBMs. In general it would fear lest the increase in over-all US deterrent capabilities impose some additional limits on the courses of action available to the Bloc as a whole. In particular it might fear that the increase in over-all US deterrent capabilities would reduce Soviet willingness to support Peiping in event of a crisis in the Far East. Moreover, Peiping would be worried about its own vulnerability to IRBMs stationed in the Far East in view of its present lack of any counter-capability.

Bloc Courses of Action Prior to Deployment

9. As a result we foresee a continuation of the major Bloc effort to prevent, limit, or at least delay US IRBM deployment, or failing this, to make it politically costly to the West. In this connection the already emerging reactions in various potential recipients and other countries are creating vulnerabilities which the Bloc is exploiting. Growing popular awareness of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and of Soviet capabilities for delivering them is accentuating fears of nuclear conflict. Among many it is nourishing the feeling, allied to this fear, that East-West accommodation is essential and should not be jeopardized by such measures as accepting IRBMs. In some cases there are substantial rifts in national opinion which may be widened. Moreover, the IRBM program is construed as lending credence to Soviet claims, already accepted by a substantial body of opinion in the neutralist countries, that the US is preoccupied with military competition in contrast to Soviet concern for ending the cold war.

10. To exploit these opportunities, the USSR is employing and will continue to employ a wide range of tactics, involving both blandishments and intimidation. In our judgment, however, the USSR will at least for a while rely primarily on its broad campaign to relax international tensions, while at the same time seeking to bring about US withdrawal from overseas bases and otherwise undermine the Western politico-military position. In Soviet eyes, this campaign will also serve to counter the deployment of US IRBMs; indeed, their prospective deployment is probably an additional factor impelling the USSR to press it. The

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object is to create a climate in which the rationale for IRBM deployments would be obscured, or their use, if once installed, would be inhibited.

11. Primary Soviet reliance on this campaign is suggested by a somewhat less bellicose approach thus far to the IRBM issue than that of last year's campaign against the stationing of US atomic units abroad. The element of intimidation, while not absent, apparently has been subdued in favor of stress upon Soviet sincerity in seeking a relaxation of tensions which would make unnecessary US deployment of IRBMs. Major efforts are being concentrated upon creating popular hopes for top-level negotiations, disarmament agreements, or various forms of disengagement. For example, the Soviets are pressing for establishment of nuclear-free zones which would, among other things, serve to block IRBM deployments to the areas concerned. As another tactic, the USSR has announced the unilateral suspension of nuclear weapons testing. These efforts are intended to create a climate of opposition to Western military moves on the grounds that they would destroy the chances for a general relaxation of tensions.

12. The element of intimidation will tend to come more to the fore, however, wherever these other approaches appear to be ineffective or where special opportunities exist. The Soviets may issue warnings so worded as to make it difficult for the US and its allies to determine whether or not they were meant to indicate an intention to resort to force. They will also try to capitalize on the view expressed in Europe and elsewhere that the deployment of IRBMs is an asset only to the US and

a liability to the country where they are located.

13. This dual approach will be applied throughout the NATO area. In the UK, attempts will be made to exploit the opposition of the Liberal and part of the Labor party to IRBM acceptance as well as current pacifist and neutralist agitation. Similar campaigns in France and Italy will be spearheaded by their large Communist parties. Appeals will also be made to neutralist elements in Greece. In the case of Turkey, Moscow will probably use blunt and simple threats.

14. The USSR has already demonstrated particular concern over the nuclear arming of West Germany, and will react more vigorously to the prospect of IRBM stationing here than in the case of any other NATO country. Not only does Moscow continue to fear a revival of the German threat, but it senses in West German political dissension particular opportunities for forestalling action. The methods which will be employed are already apparent: intimidation of the West Germans and encouragement of popular protests; overtures to the political opposition; warnings to neighbors that German irredentism could pull all Europe into atomic war; and threats that accepting IRBMs would make reunification impossible, perhaps combined with hints that the USSR might otherwise become more flexible on this issue. Also on the positive side, the USSR is offering an atom-free zone and other forms of disengagement.

15. Outside the NATO area, the strongest Soviet reaction would probably be evoked by the prospective stationing of IRBMs in Iran, owing to Soviet sensitivity over this area and because the Soviets would esti-

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mate that Iran was highly susceptible to intimidation. In the case of Pakistan, the Bloc would probably focus on threats of inevitable involvement in any East-West war, and on exploiting the strongly adverse Indian reaction. A proposal to station IRBMs in South Korea or Taiwan would be used as the basis for generating general Asian pressure on the US to forebear from such deployment. The stationing of US Matador units on Taiwan was moderately exploited along these lines, and with only limited effect. A campaign against deployment to Japan or the Philippines would be aimed primarily at neutralist and anti-American sentiment, together with reminders of inevitable retaliation in case of war. Peiping would take a major part in these Far Eastern campaigns.

16. The USSR will also attempt to induce third countries to exert pressures against IRBM bases. Throughout Europe, Soviet propaganda will play on a legacy of anti-German feeling and argue that IRBM deployment there would preclude "disengagement." Neighbors of potential recipients, e.g. Yugoslavia, India, the UAR, will be prodded not only with the general arguments employed elsewhere but with reminders that the missiles might involve them in general war or even be turned against them.

17. Despite these opportunities, the Bloc leaders probably expect that if the US persistently seeks IRBM bases around the Bloc periphery it will eventually obtain substantial and in many areas multiple coverage of the Sino-Soviet Bloc. They might expect to make deployments politically costly to the US, in terms of unfavorable foreign reactions. They would

hope that, even where their efforts to prevent deployment were unsuccessful, the scars left by the deployment controversy would be assets for future exploitation.

Subsequent Bloc Courses of Action

18. As we have already suggested, actual or imminent deployment of US IRBMs might tend to heighten Soviet fears of war by miscalculation and lead the USSR to conclude that its freedom of cold war maneuver was being somewhat narrowed. We believe that the Soviets, in view of their own growing deterrent capabilities, would not regard such deployment — by itself — as involving so radical a change in East-West power or in the risks of war by miscalculation as to require a major shift in the Soviet attitude towards disarmament. Moreover, they would still regard themselves as retaining considerable leeway for political maneuver, aimed in part at hamstringing possible use of IRBMs. In a larger context, however, US deployment of IRBMs — when considered together with other developing US military capabilities, e.g., the likely US acquisition of ICBMs and naval-launched IRBMs — might be looked upon by the USSR as adding sufficiently to the risks already inherent in the East-West military confrontation as to influence the USSR to take a more flexible position in disarmament negotiations.¹ The question of whether or not these developments would have such a cumulative impact on the Soviet disarmament posture — involving, as it does, many factors

¹ The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that this sentence tends to prejudge an important estimate which is to be considered in SNIE 11-6-58. He therefore believes that the last two sentences should be omitted.

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not considered in this paper — will be examined in our forthcoming SNIE 11-6-58.

19. The deployment of IRBMs might increase the urgency attached to various Soviet offensive and defensive countermeasures. In addition, the USSR might announce the stationing of missiles in Eastern Europe, though keeping control firmly in Soviet hands. However, it might better suit the Soviet peace campaign to claim instead that, although sorely tried, the USSR refused to be provoked into countermeasures which would still further increase the dangers of war. Moreover, considering the range and deterrent power of Soviet ICBMs and other nuclear strike capabilities, the Soviet planners might not consider it militarily necessary

to station long-range missiles in Satellite territory. Therefore we do not think that deploying IRBMs to NATO would necessarily lead the USSR to make similar counter-deployments in Eastern Europe, although the anti-deployment campaign will contain hints of such a response and a few token deployments might be carried out for bargaining and psychological purposes.

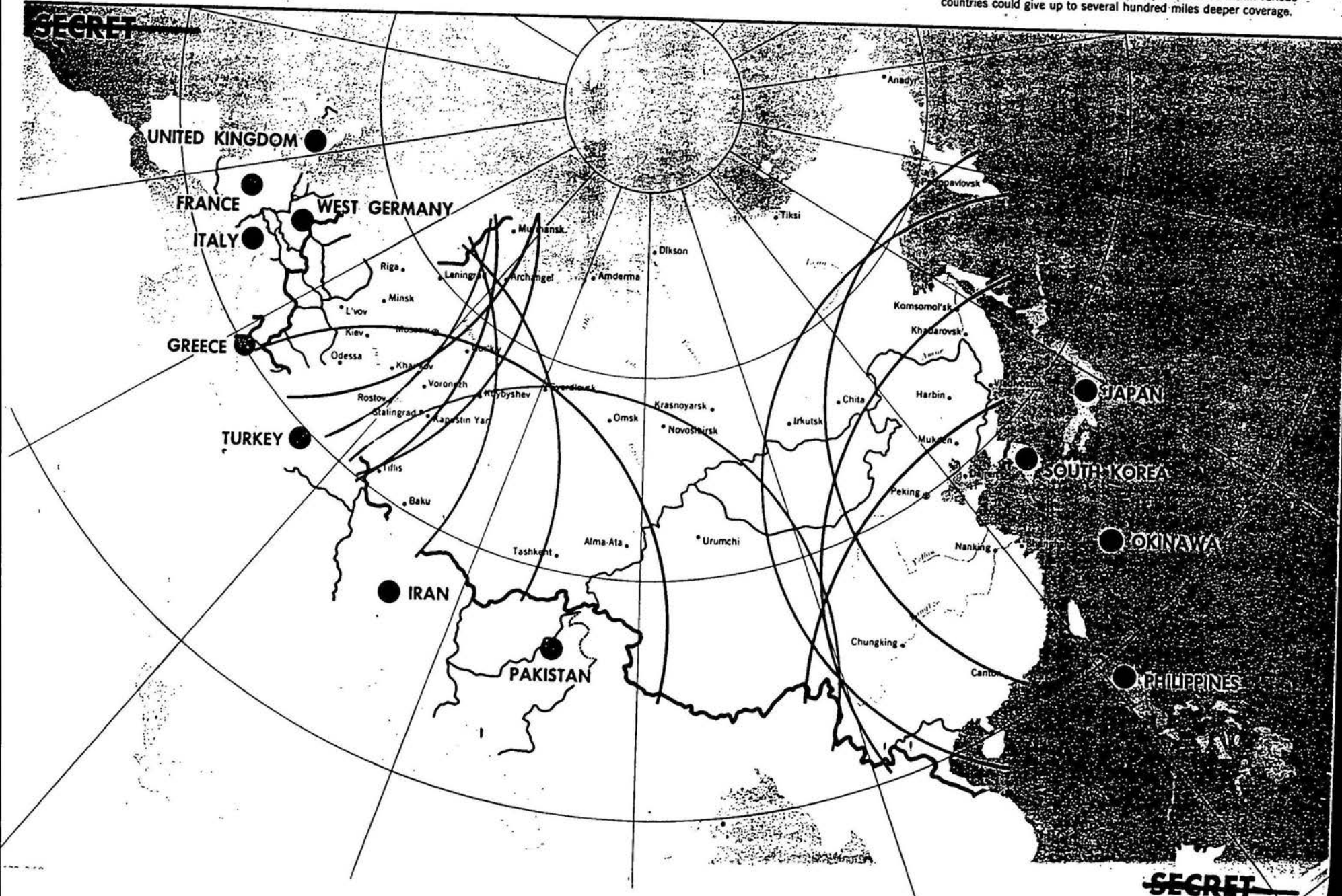
20. In the case of Communist China, IRBM deployments to the Far East would strengthen the pressure which Peiping is probably already exerting upon Moscow for the allocation of advanced weapons. In response to these pressures, the USSR might deploy advanced weapons to Communist China under arrangements preserving Soviet control.

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Coverage of Sino-Soviet Bloc by IRBM's Based in Selected Countries

Areas of coverage are based on assumed IRBM range of 1500 n.m.
 Launching sites are arbitrarily chosen; alternative sites within various countries could give up to several hundred miles deeper coverage.

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