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NUMBER 11-9-56

SINO-SOVIET INTENTIONS IN
THE SUEZ CRISIS

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 6 November 1956. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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Date 7/8/93
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SINO-SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE SUEZ CRISIS

THE ESTIMATE

1. The Soviet notes to Eden and Mollet constitute strong threats of military action against the UK, France, and Israel in connection with the Suez crisis. These threats are imprecise, however. They do not include a definite expression of Soviet intent to take unilateral military action; they still specifically call for UN action. Nevertheless, they are clearly intended to imply that the USSR may act alone.

2. There are several reasons for strong Soviet action in the Suez crisis:

a. to reassert the Soviet position as the champion of Egypt and of anticolonial countries generally;

b. to distract attention, both within and outside the Bloc, from the situation in Hungary;

c. to damage the interests and prestige of the UK and France and further divide and weaken the Western Alliances;

d. possibly, to re-establish the fear of the use of Soviet military force as a primary factor in world affairs.

3. We believe that our previous estimate that the USSR wishes to avoid general war continues to be valid.

4. It is our present estimate that the USSR:

a. will almost certainly not attack metropolitan UK or France—primarily because such an attack would make general war practically certain;

b. will probably not employ Soviet forces on a large scale in the Eastern Mediterranean—primarily because their capability to do so at an early date is inadequate, also be-

cause the risk of general war arising from such action would be very great;

c. may make small-scale attacks by air or submarine against UK and French forces in the Eastern Mediterranean—for the purpose of creating further pressures towards a UN settlement satisfactory to themselves, and showing themselves as the reliable champion of Egypt;

d. will continue to furnish military aid in the form of materiel, technicians, and logistics to Syria, and through Syria to the other Arab States, probably on an increased scale. They will probably send volunteers;

e. will at the least continue by threats to seek to create alarm in the West, in order to produce a UN settlement tolerable to the USSR.

5. With respect to the implied threat to the UK of using "rockets" (presumably guided missiles with nuclear warheads), the USSR is estimated to have the capability of delivering low yield atomic weapons by ballistic missiles with 800 nautical mile range which could reach the UK if launched from the Satellites. The 800 mile missile could reach major Israeli and Cypriot targets but not Egypt itself. Air-to-surface missiles, and probably submarine launched missiles with nuclear warheads are also within current Soviet capabilities and could pose a threat to all areas. We do not believe that the USSR would employ guided missiles with nuclear warheads in the Egyptian-Israeli conflict.

6. To attack Israel or Franco-British forces in the Eastern Mediterranean (except those on Cyprus) from present Bloc bases, the USSR would have to use aircraft of the Long-Range

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Air Force, or use IL-28 jet light bombers on missions involving no return to the Bloc. Establishment of bases for IL-28 bombers in Syria, Jordan, or Iraq is an alternative possibility, but would involve considerable problems of logistical support and defense of such bases, especially if they were used for sustained operations.

7. With respect to the Far East, we believe it possible, though it does not at present seem probable, that the Suez crisis might develop in such a way as to cause the Chinese Com-

munists to take advantage of it by an attack on the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

8. This estimate is based on intelligence received up to 1100 hours EST, 6 November. In the fast developing situation our estimates of this situation must be kept under constant review. The flow of events will be drastically affected by day to day decision and action of the main participants, including in particular the USA, and the estimate the Soviet Union reaches as to the probable course of action of the USA, and the UK and France.

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