

S E C R E T

DCI BRIEFING

22 May 1961

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

- I. Soviet policy over the past four months has been marked by wide fluctuations.
 - A. At one extreme, Khrushchev has adopted a relatively moderate attitude toward the US, and actively sought to arrange an early meeting with the President.
 - B. At the other end of the spectrum, however, he has not hesitated to exploit aggressively situations in Laos, Congo, and Cuba.
 - C. His recent speeches--his first public remarks on foreign policy for some time--contain signs that he does not intend to prolong exploitation of Cuban situation to the point of jeopardizing efforts to bring about negotiations on broader East-West issues, particularly with his meeting with President Kennedy upcoming.
 1. In Tbilisi on 12 May, Khrushchev said that he and President Kennedy have to "coexist on our planet and consequently we have to find a common language on certain questions."
 2. During his tour of Soviet Armenia, Khrushchev told his audience in Yerevan on 6 May that "we are still making efforts to improve our relations with the Western countries, including the United States of America"; he described these efforts as "most important for the settlement of vital international problems." He also claimed that the Soviet Union was preparing for disarmament talks with the US with "complete seriousness." 1-1.

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- II. The successful Soviet space flight and the turn of events in Laos and Cuba have probably reinforced the Soviet premier's confidence that he can continue to take advantage of and provoke situations in the "colonial" areas without permanently damaging his relations with the West.
- A. This high degree of confidence rests on Khrushchev's conviction that the tide of international affairs is running irrevocably in favor of the Communist world and that the West has no choice but to adjust to what Khrushchev sees as a new balance of power.

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B. Nevertheless, Khrushchev's confidence is tempered by caution.

1. For example, he has been extremely careful not to over-commit the USSR to the defense of Castro's regime.
2. Similarly, in Laos, the Communists pushed their military action to a point just short of that which they believed would force SEATO intervention.

III. While Khrushchev will continue to exploit those situations where Soviet interests can be advanced without extreme risks, his main concern is with the major issues confronting the East and West.

A. Berlin is still crucial problem for Khrushchev, and his overall future course will depend on the outcome of his efforts to resolve the problem this year.

1. We feel it is likely that if negotiations do not take place or fail, Khrushchev will proceed with his plan to sign a separate peace treaty and transfer control over Allied military traffic to the East Germans.

B. Khrushchev also recently confirmed his readiness to begin bilateral talks with the US on general disarmament next month.

1. These talks are to take up procedural questions of the composition and timing of a new negotiating body; the Soviets are currently championing the right of the neutrals to participate in future negotiations.

Khrushchev has indicated that the Soviets hope to take up substantive aspects of disarmament with the US.

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2. We continue to feel that Khrushchev has no real interest in a comprehensive disarmament agreement; while he may be interested in some limited measures, he is under no pressure to obtain an early agreement.

C.. Khrushchev's approach is well illustrated by recent Soviet behavior at the Geneva test ban talks.

1. The Soviets have introduced two new potential roadblocks:

a. They warned that a treaty will be impossible if the French continue to test.

b. They demanded that the administration of the control system be placed under a three-man council; with one Western, one Soviet, and one neutral representative to --which would be tantamount/giving the USSR a veto over effective operation of the system.

2. Khrushchev may still be interested in a test ban on terms to him, favorable ~~to him~~, but Chinese Communist opposition probably is a major factor against an agreement.

3. At some point we feel that Soviets may move to have the test ban issue merged with general disarmament talks.

IV. The Soviet demand for tripartitism at Geneva reflects the emergence of a new concept in international affairs.

A. We believe that the tripartite division of international executive organs has become basic Soviet policy.

1. Khrushchev summed this up when he announced that while there were neutral countries there were no neutral men.

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- B. In effect, the USSR has made a Soviet veto the price for co-operation in international organizations.**

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