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**SOVIET INTELLIGENCE
AND THE COLD WAR:
THE “SMALL” COMMITTEE OF
INFORMATION, 1952-53**

VLADISLAV M. ZUBOK

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During the Cold War intelligence agencies of the two adversary blocks were the surrogates for the huge armies, who stood still on the frontiers of the two adversary blocs in Europe and elsewhere. Some have argued that diplomatic historians, who do not have access to intelligence materials, know only the tip of the iceberg. They imply that we do not have a chance of writing a definitive Cold War history, especially on the Soviet side, until the repositories of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) and Military Intelligence (GRU) have been declassified.¹ Some historians question whether this assumption. John Gaddis argues that few events in the history of the Cold War would have come out differently had intelligence not existed. Authors of a recent volume on the KGB contend that most of the Cold War crises, "Soviet intelligence had been better, often vastly better, than that available to the West."² But the same book encourage one reviewer to remark that the ability Soviet Politburo "to make sense of the political intelligence"..."was impaired by their own ideological blinders and an incurable addiction to conspiracy theory."³ In other words Stalin and his successors had excellent spies but it did not help them much to wage the Cold War.

Western historians and veterans of intelligence indicate the following problems in the process of "estimative intelligence": first, the ability of intelligence analysts to distinguish between correct and incorrect, relevant and irrelevant, information; second, analysts' perceptions and their impact, for instance, on assessments of the adversary;⁴ and, third, how the relationship between intelligence and the political leadership might lead to "political distortion" of assessments.⁵ ⁶ These problems have been recently publicized by the Eastern counterparts. "The most difficult task of intelligence," one veteran of Soviet intelligence remarked, "is not to obtain information,

¹In the fall of 1991, it seemed that the KGB might begin disclosing its secrets. Rudolf Pikhov, the head of the Russian Committee on Archival Affairs, and Dmitri Volkogonov, a military adviser to the Russian President, and head of a parliamentary committee responsible for transferring the KGB papers to archives, held discussions about the release of information on KGB covert operations. But these talks quickly subsided, and the intelligence agency, now serving the Russian government, is firmly in control of declassification policy. The KGB's public relations office released some information on the Kennedy assassination and Lee Harvey Oswald in particular, but this is nothing new: much earlier it published selected documents in order to improve its public image or to refute allegations about its past activities. As for the GRU, it continues to elude public scrutiny and its documents are completely classified.

²Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story* (New York and London, 1990), 469.

³John Lewis Gaddis, "Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins," *Diplomatic History* 13:2 (Spring 1989): 191-212; "Inside the KGB: A Double Agent's Tale," *Time* (22 October 1990): 82 [a review of Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*].

⁴See Raymond L. Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary: Estimates by the Eisenhower Administration of Soviet Intentions and Capabilities* (Washington, DC, 1991).

⁵Michael Handel, "The Politics of Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* 2:4 (October 1987): 1 and 13.

⁶Harold P. Ford, *Estimative Intelligence: The Purposes and Problems of National Intelligence Estimating*

but to get its findings and conclusions across to the leadership," especially "ones that contradict leaders' deep-seated beliefs and perceptions."⁷ A veteran of the East German intelligence also agreed that even the best information is not a guarantee against policy errors.⁸

The assumptions of political leadership, shaped by general world view, sense of threat and image of an enemy played often the decisive role in the history before the Cold War. Two famous cases are the inability of American leadership and intelligence to foresee the attack on Pearl Harbor and the failure of Soviet intelligence to convince Stalin that Hitler was about to launch its "Barbarossa." It is only reasonable to suppose that the Cold War was also strewn with blunders and errors, although not so dramatic and disastrous. It is also clear that a comparative study of Soviet and U.S. intelligence efforts during that period will provide us with many striking parallels. There are some other interesting questions: Did the two adversaries imitate each other? To what extent did each recognize the other's concerns as genuine and justified? Did each fairly assess the other's intentions and seek to identify the sources of its insecurity? Did the culture or structure of the Cold War impose its patterns, sometimes hysterical, sometimes weird and conspiratorial, on each government regardless of its social, political and ideological origins? Could the same have happened if both superpowers had been modern democracies?

These issues are far beyond the scope and reach of this article. Its focus is on one case from the history of the Soviet intelligence: the "small" Committee of Information (KI), an organization that survived the collapse of its larger predecessor, "large" KI.⁹ The "top secret" files of the "small" KI, recently declassified, contain memoranda to the members of the Presidium¹⁰ and top foreign policy officials. Is. They are among the first evidence of Soviet "estimative intelligence" that became available to historians of the Cold War.

The Origins of the KI.

The "large" Committee of Information was created at Stalin's order under the aegis of the Soviet Council of Ministers in the early fall of 1947.¹¹ A KI veteran told me Stalin had been

⁷Interview with Mikhail A. Milstein, January 1990. Milstein worked for the GRU in the 1930s and 1940s.

⁸Marcus Wolf, *Po Sobstvennomu zadaniiu. Priznaniia i razduma* [On One's Own Mission. Confessions and Thoughts] (Moscow, 1992), 286.

⁹This organization has never been publicized in the Soviet Union. The first "introduction" of it to the general public was recently made in: Boris I. Ilyichev, "Diplomaticheskaya sluzhba: Lyudi i mundiri" [Diplomatic Service: People and Uniform], *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* 1 (1992): 115-127.

¹⁰At the XIXth Party Congress (October 1952), the Politburo was replaced by the Presidium of the Central Committee, a larger body consisting of 26 full members and 11 associate members.

¹¹Andrew and Gordievskiy give October as the month [*KGB*, xi].

impressed with the US National Security Act of that year, and he ordered the translation of all available material about it. It is possible that he interpreted the creation of the unified Department of Defense, the National Security Council (NSC), and the Central Intelligence Agency as preparation for a future war with, or the "strangulation" of, the Soviet Union.¹² Whether Stalin emulated the Americans or not, he went much further: united under one umbrella agency all foreign intelligence departments dealing with collection, operations and analysis.¹³ Until then there was a well-established division between the "political intelligence," primarily concentrated in the First Directorate of the State Security (NKVD and then MGB) and the "military intelligence" run by the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) at the Soviet General Staff. The new umbrella agency, KI, took a prominent place in Soviet bureaucratic structure: it was not just another ministry, but was directly attached to the Council of Ministers and was chaired by Vyacheslav Molotov, Deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs.

The archives of the "large" KI are still closed and its history is murky. A handful of interviews and publications leave contradictory picture. Some inform us that Stalin's objective in creating the KI may have been to wrest control over foreign intelligence from Lavrenty Beria and top military officials and to centralize it under Molotov and himself. Indeed, old elites loyal to Beria were cut into two parts: one stayed in MGB, another went over to KI. Other sources stress that the main idea behind the KI was to bring multi-sources information to a common denominator. They say that the Soviet leadership reacted to sharp differences in estimates among various services.

The collapse of the "large" KI is as enigmatic as its origins. One possible explanation that inter-service rivalry between the MGB and the GRU did not stop inside the KI, but took other forms. The military intelligence officers had long complained that their "neighbors" from the State Security took advantage of their networks without giving anything in return. At the same time the output, the common denominator of the intelligence work, turned to be low. The control of operations fell into the hands of non-professionals. In Washington, for instance, GRU resident worked under ambassador Alexander Panyushkin who, at one point even took operational control of the MGB residency. The initial benefits of the KI (screening of disinformation) were

¹²When in July 1947 the MGB translated for Stalin the famous "X Article" by George Kennan in *Foreign Affairs*, its chiefs, guessing Stalin's mood, attempted to translate the word "containment" as "strangulation." Analysts defended the correct translation and won. Georgi Kornienko, "U istokov kholodnoi voini," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriya* 6 (December 1990): 122.

¹³Information on the origins and early history of the KI is quite limited. I conducted interviews with several KI veterans, and I especially appreciate the detailed account given to me by George Kornienko, who began his career as a translator at the Information Service of the MGB, was transferred to the KI in 1947, and worked there through all its permutations until 1958. Soviet defectors from the KGB and the GRU also provide some evidence. See Gordievsky and Andrew, *KGB*, 381-83, 415, 706; and Victor Suvorov, *Inside Soviet Military Intelligence* (New York, 1984), 27-28.

overshadowed by disadvantages: "live," contradictory information from competing services was reduced to one-dimensional, standardized messages.¹⁴

In 1948 the military command persuaded Stalin to allow the GRU to resume its separate existence. MGB stations began to bypass the KI's central analytical staff and sent juicy bits of information directly to Stalin. In addition Molotov lost Stalin's trust and accelerated the demise of the "large" KI. When Molotov ceased to be its head, the KI, still autonomous, became affiliated with the Foreign Ministry, instead of the the Council of Ministers.

The need for intelligence work, and especially the need to filter out unreliable or "implanted" information, must have encouraged the Soviet leadership to preserve the central analytical staff of the KI. Many career officials, especially senior ones, returned to their positions in MGB, but the younger ones stayed on.

The KI staff now lacked some of its most experienced personnel. This was the case with the department responsible for US affairs, most of whose officers now had little first-hand knowledge of the United States. It was staffed mainly by recent graduates from the Moscow Institute of International Affairs (IMO), men and women trained in foreign languages and history. Of course, isolation of the Stalinist Soviet Union from the rest of the world affected their intellectual horizons and thinking. They were "Stalin's children," their minds were often "clogged and blunted" by the years of black and white propaganda.¹⁵ In contrast to their CIA counterparts, few of them had been shaped by pre-World War II experiences. Virtually none of them had doctoral degrees in international economy or modern history, not to mention jurisprudence, political science, or sociology.

Still, at the start, the "small" KI prospered. Some of the experienced cadres stayed on, including Ivan Tugarinov and Timofei Kuprikov.¹⁶ They ruled the younger staff with a stern hand and edited their writings with a keen eye for the slightest error, either factual or political. The young recruits learned on the job, by reading and translating Western articles.¹⁷

The "small" KI relied on informal contacts and bureaucratic channels left over from the "large" KI. Despite its affiliation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, remained an autonomous body, probably with a separate budget and a direct mail to the Old Square and the Kremlin. It was entitled to receive all pertinent information from foreign intelligence. Also helpful was the fact that its staff consisted of former young recruits of the MGB and GRU, who naturally maintained

¹⁴The ideas of this paragraph came from a conversation with Mikhail Milstein, 12 August 1992, Moscow.

¹⁵Georgi A. Arbatov, *Zatyanyvsheesya vizdorovlenie (1953-1985): Svitdetelstvo Sovremnnika* (Moskva, 1991), 53.

¹⁶B. Ilyichev, op. cit., 119.

¹⁷Interview with Georgi Kornienko, 22 December 1989.

and made use of their old ties with the intelligence community. Beyond that, KI staffers tried to compensate for information gaps by means of better storage and organization. They developed the best cataloguing and retrieval system in Soviet intelligence at the time. The team spirit of the Committee was also high; interregional task forces and "indoor discussions" also helped somewhat to deal with information shortages and contradictions.¹⁸ Many on the KI staff later became part of Soviet foreign policy elite, among them Valentin Falin, Viktor Karpov, Lev Mendelevich, and Georgi Kornienko.

The Crisis of Succession and Information

When Stalin died in March 1953 he left to his successors a deadlock in foreign policy, backlog of vital problems and a dearth of ideas how to solve them. The tyrant maintained deliberately maintained analytical vacuum below him deliberately. He reserved all final decisions for himself and rationales for those decisions shrouded in secrecy. They were hardly discussed at all (at least not in writing). Documents reveal the absence of "debates" in the Western sense of the word¹⁹ -- even at the level of the Politburo. It could never function as a collective decisionmaking body, and it never had a staff that could fulfill the coordination function comparable to that of the NSC staff in the United States. The statistics of Politburo meetings in the early Cold War period dispel any illusions we might have about its role in Soviet foreign policy decisionmaking. Historian Yuri Aksyonov offers the following figures: only 7 Politburo sessions took place in 1946, 10 in 1947, 7 again in 1948, 10 in 1949, and a record 16 in 1950. Virtually all of these meetings dealt with cadre questions and reorganizations (in fact, the 10 sessions in 1949 were dedicated solely to the so-called "Leningrad affair").²⁰

Stalin alone remained the person who defined all crucial directions of domestic and foreign policy.²¹ Ad hoc panels of the Politburo (so-called *troyki* and *shestyorki*, depending on number of people involved) were often formed according to the whims of the aging dictator, not the expertise of Politburo members. In the end, Stalin left the governmental decisionmaking

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹No conferences or discussions on national security were sponsored by the Politburo until the now-famous effort of Yuri Andropov in 1983. It appears that no substantive internal debates on strategy, analogous to, for example, Eisenhower's 1953 "Solarium" exercise, were held by the Soviet foreign policy making elite until the first Scientific and Practical Conference in July 1988.

²⁰Yu. S. Aksyonov, "Apogei Stalinizma: Poslevoyennaya Piramida Vlasti" [The Apogee of Stalinism: Postwar Pyramid of Power], *Voprosy istorii KPSS* 11 (November 1990): 100-101. These figures refer to formal Politburo sessions, at which minutes were kept, many other informal meetings also probably took place.

²¹Aksyonov, op. cit., 101.

mechanism in shambles, a situation Politburo member and future Premier Nikita Khrushchev vividly portrayed in his memoirs.²²

All important foreign policy information that were collected by the huge conglomerate of Soviet intelligence services, distributed about several dozens highest officials. But the most sensitive data was intended only to Stalin and Molotov, the latter often playing a role of the only consiglieri to the leader of the soviet Union. Molotov's Sekretariat could barely cope with the torrent of information. A veteran of the Sekretariat recalls that the staff worked 18-19 hours a day. They had to prepare background material for Molotov's daily reports to Stalin after midnight and stayed beyond that time to meet Molotov's and Stalin's requests for the next day. "The amount of material and documents that reached the summits of power as then structured," the Sekretariat veteran writes, "was too great for any single person to read, let alone digest." Stalin, whose health was deteriorating after the Second World War, lacked time to read: he relied on Molotov's reports and on special, very brief papers, where information was given only "in a nutshell."²³ As for Sekretariat officials, fatigue, even exhaustion, was the price they paid for this system.

Stalin's death and the establishment of the "collective leadership" in Moscow were bound to change this situation dramatically. The struggle for succession began immediately: at first front-runners were Lavrenty Beria and Georgi Malenkov. The latter strengthened his control over the State Security, GULAG and foreign intelligence. He and Malenkov launched a set of initiatives in domestic and foreign policy designed to stabilize the internal situation, distinguish them among the rest of the post-Stalin leadership, and, finally, to lessen international tensions. A "peace initiative," the most visible part of Malenkov-Beria activities, included a set of small concessions and conciliatory steps: the end of harassment of foreign diplomatic community in Moscow, dropping of territorial demands to Turkey, attempts to resume diplomatic relations with Greece and Israel, and, finally, behind-the-scenes efforts to put an effective end to the Korean war.

What lay behind the "peace offensive"? One Western interpretation maintains that the new Soviet leaders simply pursued a pragmatic policy of minor concessions, "individual small moves necessary to create a climate of relaxation and coexistence." Molotov, Malenkov, and Beria were incapable of transcending the Stalinist mentality of the Cold War, according to this argument, but

²²"Everyone in the orchestra [the Politburo and its commissions] was playing on his own instrument anytime he felt like it, and there was no direction from the conductor." [Strobe Talbot, ed., *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston, 1970), 297; see also Vernon V. Aspaturian, "The Stalinist Legacy in Soviet National Security Decision-Making," in Jiri Valenta and William Potter, eds., *Soviet Decisionmaking for National Security* (London, 1984), 60-65.

²³Vladimir Yerofeev, interview with the author, 14 August 1992.

they did not mind removing some of the consequences of "Stalin's capriciousness or stubbornness."²⁴ Another interpretation is offered by political scientists who use the case of Soviet behavior in 1953-55 to illustrate the concept of GRIT (Graduated Reduction of International Tensions) as a workable diplomatic strategy. "After Stalin's death," Deborah Larson argues, "Soviet leaders recognized that the former dictator's bellicose policies had driven the Western countries closer together and provoked West German rearmament." She writes that the "Soviet government's first attempt to apply GRIT to U.S.-Soviet relations" was "in March-June 1953...."²⁵

Both interpretations underestimated the momentum of power struggle that pushed some Stalin's successors to challenge his legacy as vehemently as it induced the others to stand up in its defense. Vyacheslav Molotov who regained its power positions and became the unique authority on international relations in the Politburo (Presidium) was in the second group. He was supported by a secretary Nikita Khrushchev. At first the "peace initiative" of Beria-Malenkov seemed to define the Soviet foreign policy but after June, when Beria was arrested, the more "hard line"

Molotov became the political supervisor of the "small" KI and the main consumer of its reports. As to the formal head of the KI, it fell to Andrei Gromyko, a forty-four year old protege of Molotov, former ambassador in Washington and London and a Deputy Foreign Minister in 1953. The "small" KI began to send its products to a slightly broader circle: secretaries of the Central Committee and members of the Politburo (Presidium) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, members of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. What did these reports say and how did they correspond with assumptions and worries of this important group of readers?

The fear of collision with the United States was an immediate concern of the Kremlin rulers and, besides the calculations of the power struggle, the stimulus to support a "peace initiative." New Secretary of State Foster Dulles was making bellicose promises to take the "offensive" in the Cold War and to "roll back" Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. Stalin in the last months of his life was scared of it and passed his fear to the subordinates. "We believed," recalled Khrushchev,

²⁴David J. Dallin, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin* (New Haven, 1961), 122.

²⁵Deborah W. Larson, "Crisis Prevention and the Austrian State Treaty," *International Organization* 41:1 (Winter 1987): 58 and 33. At least two other scholars share this attitude: see Robert C. Tucker, "Research Note on Stalin's Death," paper presented to the U.S.-Soviet seminar on the Cold War, October 1988, Athens, Ohio; and Matthew Evangelista, "Cooperation Theory and Disarmament Negotiations in the 1950s," *World Politics* 42:4 (July 1990): 502-29.

that America would invade the Soviet Union and we would go to war. Stalin trembled at this prospect. How he quivered! He was afraid of war. He knew we were weaker than the the United States.²⁶

The KI reports confirmed the impression that the United States intended to launch, if not a premeditated attack, then a well-planned campaign of encirclement of the Soviet Union with bases and alliances. In August 1952, the KI had reported on US moves to push Austria toward a separate agreement with the West, a development that could lead to "a formal integration of Austria into the aggressive bloc [NATO] with its territory becoming an American military foothold in the center of Europe."²⁷ At the same time Soviet intelligence, quoted by the KI, reported on the efforts of the United States to gradually prepare "the creation of a politico-military alliance in Northern Europe, spreading from Denmark to neutral Sweden and even Finland."²⁸ From the summer of 1952 on, the Soviet leaders were briefed on NATO preparations to build airbases in Norway and Denmark.²⁹ In Germany, as the KI report for December 1952 claimed, forces were regrouping that might soon form a new party--one "of an openly nationalist and revanchist kind." "The possibility should be not excluded," the document read, "that, as the military and economic might of German imperialism increases, these forces might come to the forefront in West German political life."³⁰ In all reports on West Germany, the KI repeated an alarmist note: the United States and the other Western powers will soon begin losing control over the Germans.³¹ Hopes that West Germany might seek accommodation with Moscow were clearly overshadowed by apprehensions that "revanchists" might provoke a conflict that would in turn trigger global war.

The arc of menace also reached to the south. In September 1952, KI analysts warned that the United States had inspired a military coup in Egypt to "create conditions for drawing Egypt into the [US] Middle East Command."³² Two months later Soviet diplomats in Kabul learned that the Americans "were insisting on gaining the right to build airstrips and other military installations in Afghanistan."³³

The KI watchers closely followed the U.S. elections of 1952 and commented on their possible international impact. Quite early they concluded that Dulles, not President Eisenhower,

²⁶Jerrold Schechter and Vyacheslav Luchkov, eds., *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston, 1991), 100-101.

²⁷23 August 1952, *KI*, vol. 7, 224.

²⁸24 November 1952, *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 149.

²⁹24 November 1952, *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 55-60.

³⁰"O planakh ob'edineniya revanshistskikh sil v Zapadnoi Germanii" ["on the Plans to Unify the Revanchist Forces in West Germany"], 13 December 1952, *Ibid.*, 70 and 84.

³¹ **?? Date ??**, *Ibid.* vol 6, 11 and 36.

³²12 September 1952, *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 45.

³³25 November 1952, *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 177.

was the primary maker of Republican foreign policy. Dulles' declared policy of "roll-back" appeared as

a resort to subversive or any other methods, regardless of international commitments, with the goal of eliminating the People's Democratic regimes and severing the Baltic republics from the USSR.³⁴

Dulles' intention to banish George F. Kennan and his influence from the State Department was taken as a bad omen--despite the fact that Stalin had inadvertently facilitated Ambassador Kennan's departure by declaring him *persona non grata* in October 1952 for his reckless comparison of Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany.³⁵

What about Eisenhower and his promise to "go to Korea" to achieve a peaceful settlement? Some KI officials felt Eisenhower wanted peace, but they were not sure by what means.³⁶ One report, dated 31 January 1953, argued that the Eisenhower administration "far from heeding its electoral promises, intends to continue the Korean war, and even undertake acts of overt aggression against the People's Republic of China. Its new strategic plan envisages...engagement of KMT troops in Korea to prepare a large-scale spring offensive this year." The report concluded also that "the government circles of the United States are discussing use of the atomic bomb in Korea," although "the U.S. military leadership is not convinced" of the weapon's effectiveness.³⁷

Eisenhower, in the eyes of some Soviet leaders, including Khrushchev, still enjoyed some credit as a hero of anti-Nazi Grand Alliance. But the KI experts were harsh to the General. Their profiles described him as "ignorant...in political matters."³⁸ His Administration will, the KI concluded, adopt an "even more aggressive course" toward the "accelerated preparation of a war for global domination." In particular, Eisenhower will proceed with greater vigor to rearm West Germany "and make it a major pillar of its aggressive policy in Europe," since he was elected with

³⁴"Predvibornaia bor'ba v SSha" [The Electoral Struggle in the United States], 16 August 1952, *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 136.

³⁵"O nekotorykh voprosakh vneshnei politiki novogo pravitel'stva SSha" [On Some of the Foreign Policy Attitudes of the New U.S. Administration], 31 January 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 12, 213-215. Kennan, while he was the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, advocated negotiations with the Soviets over the future of Germany. He thought that the Russians felt encircled and might be willing to strike a deal. See Melvyn P. Leffer, *A Preponderance of Power. National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, 1992), 461; and also George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1950-1963* (Boston, 1972), 105-44.

³⁶?? DATE ??, *KI*, vol. 11, 97.

³⁷?? DATE ??, *KI*, vol. 12, 220, 222, and 223]. The KI analyst, Georgi Kornienko, was correct: such discussions did, in fact, take place; see *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-1954*, vol. 15, *Korea*, (Washington, D.C., 1984), part 1, 770, 815, 817-818, 826-827; and Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C., 1987), 37-41.

³⁸"O kandidatakh v presidenti i vitse-prezidenti SSha" ["On the Candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States"], 16 August 1952, *KI*, vol. 7, 150.

the support of a "group of Wall Street monopolies that have large investments in West German industry."³⁹

Before he died Stalin had been preparing a new and particularly vicious clampdown on potential "fifth columns," including the Jews. . The KI report on international reaction to the announcement of the Doctors' Plot in January 1953 referred to "unofficial data, obtained from US communists." "American propaganda," it said,

to a great extent has managed to persuade the Jewish population in the United States that there is an anti-Semitic campaign underway in the USSR.... American ruling circles are widely exploiting the TASS announcement [on the "Doctors' plot"] to promote the anti-Soviet campaign in the USA as well as in other capitalist countries. The major goal of this campaign is probably to justify the subversive and espionage activities of the United States against the countries of the democratic camp.⁴⁰

The report was sent to Malenkov and Molotov, but interestingly, Stalin's and Beria's name did not appear on the distribution list.

After Stalin's death Beria was the first who suggested to cancel the purges. Malenkov and Molotov supported this step.

The second biggest concern of the post-Stalin leaders was to avoid "any kind of disorder or panic" in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries. Many in the Kremlin believed, and Khrushchev later told about it openly, that weakness and indecisiveness which might encourage Western powers to press the Soviet Union into unilateral concessions, especially on German peace settlement. In the first weeks after Stalin's death the KI confirmed these suspicions. It reported to the Presidium that the "American reactionary press has urged that the moment [the succession crisis] be seized and the strategy of liberation implemented." The "ruling circles" of the NATO countries

assumed that the death of Stalin would trigger domestic unrest in the Soviet Union and would lead to a weakening of the USSR's international influence. The reactionary press...is rife with speculation about the inevitable "crisis" in the Soviet Union and "the protracted struggle for power."

³⁹?? DATE ??, Ibid., vol. 12, 207; "Opolitike zapadnikh derzhav po germanskomu voprosu" [On the Policy of the Western Powers on the German Question"], 6 May 1953, Ibid., vol. 16, 14 and 19.

⁴⁰?? DATE ??, KI, vol. 12, 154 and 156.

Formation of the new ruling group, comprising Malenkov, Molotov, and others, analysts concluded, "was a total surprise" to the West and "finished all hopes of weakening the Soviet Union."⁴¹

In this light the Soviet peace initiative seemed a sound and timely measure, preempting the most dangerous plans of the enemy. "New peaceful steps by the Soviet government," read one report, "have frustrated Eisenhower's foreign policy plans and put him in a difficult situation."⁴²

On April 16 Eisenhower addressed Soviet leaders in a major speech that indicated dangers and costs of continuing the Cold War and hinted that, if certain concessions were made by the Soviet side, it might lead to negotiations. The reaction in the Kremlin to this speech was not unanimous or negative.⁴³ Some preferred to look at the speech as a promising "probe," perhaps even a sign of Eisenhower's peacefulness.⁴⁴ The KI, on the contrary, reported that Eisenhower had begun a propaganda counterattack in order to neutralize the Soviet peace offensive. The analysts found the speech both "irritating and provocative." They wrote:

By putting forward for demagogic purposes its own 'peace plan,' the Eisenhower administration in fact endeavors by all means to complicate unresolved international issues and not to allow any reduction in existing tensions between the Western powers and the Soviet Union, because that would inevitably impede the fulfillment of American plans for war. The American "peace plan" evidently pursues the goal of making it more difficult for the Soviet government to come forward with specific new initiatives on the most important issues....⁴⁵

The Georgi Kornienko, then a KI expert, told recently that they had been sure at that time that a speech by Dulles two days after Eisenhower's speech meant to strengthen the President's message and was a more blunt expression of US goals and intentions.⁴⁶ Dulles demanded from the Soviets virtual capitulation: a total revision of Stalin's policies, first of all in Eastern Europe. They believed Dulles represented the powerful grouping of "resolute enemies of any attempts at peaceful accommodations," including the Department of Defense, the CIA, and conservative Republican Senators such as Robert Taft and William Knowland.⁴⁷

When the new US ambassador, Charles Bohlen, arrived in Moscow, the Soviets greeted him with suspicion. In Bohlen's profile, sent to the Presidium, analysts characterized him as a hidden advocate of roll-back, and both a Germanophile and supporter of the division of Germany

⁴¹31 March 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 14, 269-270.

⁴²25 March 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 14, 69-70.

⁴³"The Chance for Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 28:722 (27 April 1953): 599-603.

⁴⁴See Georgi Kornienko's remarks at the Eisenhower Centennial Conference in Moscow, November 1990.

⁴⁵**?? DATE ??**, *KI*, vol. 14, 272-74.

⁴⁶Kornienko's remarks at the Eisenhower Centennial Conference; for Dulles' speech, see "The First 90 Days," *Department of State Bulletin* 28:722 (27 April 1953): 603-608.

⁴⁷**?? DATE ??**, *KI*, vol. 15, 122-44.

in 1946-1947.⁴⁸ This "blackballing," fair or not, left its traces. Later Khrushchev took even harsher view of Bohlen. He believed the reports that identified Bohlen as a source of rumours about Khrushchev's addiction to alcohol. Vindictive Khrushchev called him "a shameless reactionary who supported all the most hateful policies conducted by antagonistic forces in the United States. He pulled every dirty trick he thought he could get away with."⁴⁹

All these assessments, along with earlier negative outlooks of Eisenhower and Dulles convinced the KI observers very early that there was no chance of normalizing relations with the United States in the immediate future. "In reality the ruling circles of the USA would obviously do everything to postpone negotiations with the USSR," the KI concluded, "for they fear that these negotiations could lead to a fiasco regarding ratification of an European Defense Community agreement and complicate the completion of aggressive US preparations for war against countries of the democratic camp."⁵⁰ In the situation of uncertainty and equilibrium between the Beria-Malenkov group and the "hard-liners" this conclusion probably made a difference. In any case nobody in the Soviet leadership took a risk of making overt approaches to the Eisenhower administration.

Many in the West, including Eisenhower and Dulles feared that the Soviets would use its peaceful initiative to split the United States from its allies in Western Europe, especially France and Great Britain. These fears had serious grounds. At the 19th Party Congress in 1952 Malenkov who was a keynote speaker there declared that "the antagonisms between the United States and Britain and between the United States and France are becoming increasingly acute."⁵¹ In one of his last interviews, Stalin had similarly predicted a rupture between the United States and these two key European allies.⁵²

In fact NATO had its obvious weak spots. KI analysts commented that the rhetoric of roll-back in the US press and among conservative Republicans had alarmed "influential bourgeois circles in England and France," especially the latter. The French, they wrote, viewed talks with the Soviet Union as a viable alternative to the "ratification of military and political agreements with West Germany."⁵³ They believed the anti-German sentiments in France were strong enough to scuttle the European Defense Community (EDC), the plan to rearm the Federal Republic in the

⁴⁸"B.N. Ponomarevu -- Spravka o Charlze Bolene" ["To B.N. Ponomarev -- On Charles Bohlen"], 25 March 1953, *KOI*, vol. 14, 192-197; "Dopolnitel'niye svedeniya o Bolene" [Additional Data on Bohlen"], 25 March 1953, *KI*, **?? volume ??**, 204; and "Molotov V. M. -- Spravka na Bolena" ["To V. M. Molotov -- On Bohlen"], 26 March 1953, *Ibid.*, **?? volume ??**, 221-26.

⁴⁹Strobe Talbot, ed., *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston, 1974), 360.

⁵⁰**?? DATE ??**, *KI*, vol. 14, 272-74.

⁵¹The speech appears in translation in Martin Ebon, *Malenkov, Stalin's Successor* (New York, 1953), 170.

⁵²See Dallin, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin*, 118.

⁵³**?? DATE ??**, *KI*, vol. 14, 270.

context of an integrated West European force.⁵⁴ In early April 1953, KI reported that Premier George Bidault and Foreign Minister Jean Meyer had warned Eisenhower and Dulles that the Assembly would not ratify the Paris EDC agreements if the Saar region were not returned to France. Six months later, Soviet intelligence and foreign ministry officials were certain that the "correlation of forces in the National Assembly excluded any possibility of satisfying the American demand for quick ratification." At the same time the KI warned many times that, if the EDC failed the United States and Eisenhower personally would support the creation of an independent *Bundeswehr*.⁵⁵

In retrospect, it is strange that Soviet diplomacy totally bungled this promising situation. Had the Soviets agreed to sign a treaty on a neutral demilitarized Austria, they would have thrown a monkeywrench into the plans of West German rearmament. After Khrushchev's victory over Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich in June 1957, this inaction was attributed to Molotov's dogmatism. According to secret files of the Party Control Commission, Molotov in 1953-1954 was strongly against the Austrian treaty. He was sure that the Americans who pocket Austria and still succeed, by hook or by crook, remilitarize the FRG. In this case the KI analyses did not coincide with assumptions of its primary reader and were discarded.

In another momentous episode the Committee happened to be into conflict with the supreme boss of Soviet espionage, Lavrenty Beria who read many KI reports with keen and malicious attention. Beria's plot to grab power implied the elimination of Molotov, his most dangerous rival. Consequently, he attempted a major reversal of the existing foreign policy associated with Stalin and Molotov. In addition Beria was probably less inhibited by the peculiar mixture of Bolshevism and Russian nationalism that motivated Molotov.

Beria's first attempt related to Germany. On May 27 he, with Malenkov's silent approval, told at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was not even "a real state," that the "construction of socialism" there must be stopped, and that the goal of Soviet foreign policy should be a unified, democratic, and neutral Germany. He preempted Molotov's report, which supported cautious "socialization" of the GDR.⁵⁶ There is

⁵⁴On the Western side of this subject, see Rol Steininger, "John Foster Dulles, the European Defense Community, and the German Question," and Hans-Jurgen Grabbe, "Konrad Adenauer, John Foster Dulles, and West German-American Relations," both in Richard H. Immerman, ed., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, 1990), 79-108 and 109-32 respectively; Thomas Shwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal republic of Germany* (Cambridge, 1991), 115-158; Frank Ninkovich, *Germany and the United States; Transformation of the German Question Since 1945* (Boston, 1988), 87-106; and James G. Hershberg, "Explosin in the Offing: German Rearmament and American Diplomacy, 1953-55," *Diplomatic History* 16:4 (Fall 1992), 511-49.

⁵⁵14 November 1952, *KI*, vol. 10, 68; and vol. 12, 19.

⁵⁶See *Sto sorok besed s Molotovim*, 332-33[**Need more bibliographic info.**]; Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Aktisia," in V. F. Nekrasov, ed., *Beria: konets karyeri* (Moscow, 1991), 262-63; Andrei A. Gromyko, *Memories* (London, 1989), 318; the recently declassified records of the July 1953 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 1 (January 1991): 157 & 163; and James Richter, "Reexamining Soviet Policy

no evidence what were Beria's calculations. Perhaps he expected that the FRG's Social Democratic Party (SPD), then opposing Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in parliamentary elections, could become "useful idiots" in the Kremlin's hands: the SPD's calls for reunification and its anti-American rhetoric seemed to make possible a tactical alliance with it. Preparing for this step, Beria asked the KI to write an assessment of the SPD leadership and its positions on foreign policy.

The KI analysts, who had access to the field reports of the MGB and GRU, decided that an SPD government, "if it comes to power, will take a course to consolidate the division of Germany."⁵⁷ Beria--in an act that was truly rare--sent his comments back to the Committee's analysts, expressing his understandable doubts. On 5 June 1953 a KI analyst replied that the SPD and its chief, Kurt Schumacher, rejected all attempts of German communists and the GDR's Socialist Unity Party (SED) to discuss a joint campaign against the Paris (EDC) and Bonn (FRG remilitarization) agreements. The Social Democrats, it concluded, differed only tactically from Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's ruling Christian Democrats, and their ultimate policy was the same: to perpetuate the division of Germany and pursue FRG rearmament.⁵⁸ Beria could hardly have been pleased with this conclusion that put his proposal about Germany's reunification in a bad light.

Beria's second effort focused on Yugoslavia. He, unlike Khrushchev, knew in the leadership knew that Molotov had played a leading role in the 1948 break with Tito. So Beria sent a secret emissary who proposed to Yugoslav Prime Minister Rankovic a secret meeting, and, ultimately, the restoration of friendly relations.⁵⁹ Later, when Beria was arrested, Molotov and Khrushchev would call this ploy high treason.

But earlier in the spring the Presidium had quietly decided to stop the "hate-Tito" campaign and directed the KI to take a fresh look at Yugoslavia, both its domestic and external policies. The assessments drawn were clearly carried over from earlier memos on "the measures taken by the Tito clique" to restore and strengthen "the fascist regime in Yugoslavia"⁶⁰ -- probably with an eye on Molotov's attitudes. "The Tito government," the KI concluded in June 1953, "is maintaining a course toward the restoration of capitalist relations in the cities and villages." Since this naturally undermined its popular support, "the dictatorship has to rely mostly on the armed forces and the sprawling network of UDB (secret police)." In foreign affairs, moreover, the Tito

Toward Germany During the Beria Interregnum," *Cold War History Project Working Paper No. 3* (Washington, D.C., June 1992).

⁵⁷"Pozitsii sotsial-demokraticheskoi partii ZApadnoi Germanii po osnovnim voprosam vneshnei politiki" ["The Positions of the SPD of West Germany on Major Foreign Policy Issues"], 21 May 1953, *KI*, vol. 16, 137.

⁵⁸**?? DATE ??**, *Ibid.*, vol. 17, 93-98; I could not find Beria's comments in the KI archives.

⁵⁹*Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 1 (January 1991): 143 & 165.

⁶⁰4 October 1952, *KI*, vol. 9, 50-74; 28 January 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 12, 174-97.

government had become almost completely dependant on US "aid." That was why the Yugoslav leadership, if still unready to fulfill all US demands and join NATO, "is seriously afraid lest any rumors regarding, not to mention practical steps taken toward, normalization of Soviet-Yugoslav relations displease US ruling circles."⁶¹

This was too much for Beria's patience. Upon reading the June report, he called on a hapless KI official, and vented his rage. Terrified KI analysts waited for the axe to fall. But fortunately for them, Beria had more serious troubles: on June 26 he himself was arrested, and later that year he was shot.⁶²

Soviet Defeats in Germany and Iran

The future of Germany was priority number one in the eyes of the collective leadership. Molotov, as well as the majority of the Soviet rulers, sincerely believed that the rearmament of the FRG presented the greatest challenge to Soviet national security. The Soviets did not view--as they would later--the US presence in the FRG as a positive, stabilizing phenomenon. They never doubted that Eisenhower and Dulles were in league with Adenauer against the GDR and Soviet interests in Eastern Europe. But they expected Adenauer's Christian Democrat-Christian Social Union (CSU) bloc to lose the September 1953 elections, meaning an SPD government in Bonn. That, in turn, would amount to a serious blow to US influence in Europe and cause serious discord in NATO.

Events in Berlin wrecked this scenario. On June 16-17, East Berlin workers began a political strike which quickly generated demands for free elections and reunification. The revolt was crushed by the Red Army; only Soviet bayonets saved the East German regime. These events took the Eisenhower administration by surprise. But in the Kremlin, many saw the Berlin uprising as ominous proof of the West's true intentions. *New Times*, a Soviet weekly created by Stalin to disseminate abroad the Kremlin's views on international affairs, published on July 1 an article on the "fascist provocation by foreign mercenaries," and warned that the "events in Berlin were a serious warning sign that called for vigilance." Visits to Berlin by OSS-founder William

⁶¹Lev Mendelevich, "O vnutrennei i vneshnei politike yugoslavskogo pravitelstva" ["On domestic and foreign policies of the Yugoslav government"], 2 June 1953, *KI*, vol. 17, 22-25.

⁶²Interview with Kornienko, 22 December 1989; on Beria's arrest see V. F. Nekrasov, ed., op. cit., 262-289; Thaddeus Wittlin, *Commissar: The Life and Death of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria* (New York, 1972), 393-401; and Victor Baras, "Beria's Fall and Ulbricht's Survival," *Slavic Studies* 27:3 (July 1975), 381.

Donovan, Eleanor Dulles, and other US personages were cited as undeniable proof that CIA subversion had helped trigger the nefarious "events" of June.⁶³

The KI reported on agitation and the activities of certain refugee organizations in the FRG. Yet, the analysts still entertained hopes about the September elections. The KI reported that US influence in the FRG was in decline, so Washington would be even more interested in keeping Adenauer in power. The Social Democrats, if they were to win, "would conduct a policy on a number of points [including the Bonn and Paris agreements] differently from the Adenauer clique. That would mean deterioration of the US position in Western Europe and a sharpening of contradictions in the imperialist camp."⁶⁴

The CDU-CSU victory in the national elections on September 6 meant the KI had some explaining to do. What they came up with was a striking contrast to the Soviets' official explanation that US intervention in the election campaign had been decisive.⁶⁵ In its classified analysis, the KI cited an increase in nationalist passions, fanned by 6-7 million refugees (including one million from the GDR); Adenauer's skillful exploitation of the June events in Berlin; the growing economic might of West Germany; the "organic weakness of the democratic camp" (the Communist Party in the FRG); the "treacherous policies of the Social Democrats"; and the FRG's anti-democratic electoral laws.⁶⁶ KI analysts implied that the FRG's allegedly domestic situation made it much more difficult than in the past for the Soviets to manipulate West German politics. Anyone in the Kremlin toying with the idea of German reunification could now see who would rule in a reunified, democratic Germany.

The only glimmer of hope came from signs that the French cabinet might be more interested than it had been in the past in opening direct consultations with the Soviets.⁶⁷ But KI analysts later observed soberly that "from the very beginning the French government did not wish to negotiate the German issue with the USSR in a businesslike way."⁶⁸ It corresponded with a conviction of Molotov who believed at the time that, despite squabbles amongst NATO members, the Soviet Union faced a unified imperialist front. Any dissenting view, be it Malenkov's or Khrushchev's, was discouraged by these assessments.

⁶³Lev Bezymensky, "Kto i kak gotovil v Germanii den' Iks" ["Who Prepared X-Day in Germany -- and How"], *Novoe Vremya* 27 (1 July 1953): **??page number??**

⁶⁴"O pozitsii sotsial-demokraticeskoi partii Zapadnoi Germanii po osnovnim voprosam germanskoi problemi" ["On the Position of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany on the Major Points of the German Issue"], 7 August 1953, *KI*, vol. 19, 24 & 40.

⁶⁵It indeed was a factor; see Grabbe, "West German-American Relations," 116-17.

⁶⁶"O politicheskikh itogakh parlamentskikh vborov v Zapadnoi Germanii" ["On the Political Results of the Parliamentary Elections in West Germany"], 14 September 1953, *KI*, vol. 20, 126-44.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 143.

⁶⁸17 October 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 21, 57.

In the summer of 1953, the KI analysts also began to pay more attention to Iran. The Soviet influence there was at its peak when Prime Minister Mossadeq began his nationalization of British oil companies and, through Soviet ambassador, asked for Soviet aid or at least moral support. Convinced that a communist coup was a real possibility, the United States, together with the British, carefully prepared a preemptive coup, with the American Embassy and military mission in Teheran serving as the hub of the conspiracy. Details of the U.S. involvement remain classified even now,⁶⁹ but Soviet intelligence was well aware of preparations for a coup.

The KI received data from the MGB and GRU stations in Teheran, much of it quite accurate. The analysts knew that the Americans wanted to topple Mossadeq because he had refused to join an anti-Soviet "aggression pact." They learned that US ambassador Loy Henderson, the Shah, and various generals had been conspiring against the Iranian Prime Minister since October 1952. General Fazlollah Zahedi was identified as a likely candidate to succeed Mossadeq.⁷⁰ Why then the Soviets did not take measures against it?

The answer, again, is that the correct intelligence had been ignored by the Soviet leaders. In 1952 Stalin and Molotov rebuffed Mossadeq's pleas and the Soviet ambassador in Teheran was instructed to treat Mossadeq not as almost an agent of influence of the United States and, perhaps, of Great Britain too. KI memo on the Iranian crisis, dated late May, depicted Mossadeq as a shrewd gambler who intended "to smash the national liberation movement and suppress opposition elements around the Shah in order to create the conditions for further collusion with American monopolies."

In summer of 1953 Mossadeq met with the Soviet ambassador for the last time and frankly laid out his plan: he needed a trade agreement with the Soviets to stem off British pressures to reduce prices on Iranian oil. If you refuse, he added, I would have to open talks with Western side. Under impression of this meeting a KI report in July admitted that Mossadeq might improve relations with the Soviet Union in order to put pressure on Great Britain. But several days later analysts on "the possibility of [Mossadeq's] capitulation to American and British demands."⁷¹ The intelligence station in Teheran also told of a last-minute secret oil agreement between Mossadeq and Great Britain. It found that the Iranian leader would not call for Soviet aid and support in

⁶⁹See *FRUS, 1952-54*, vol. 10, *Iran, 1951-54* (Washington, D.C. 1989): esp. 741-60. Despite this, the circumstances and participants of the plot are well known; see Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York, 1979); Richard W. Cottam, *Iran and the United States: A Cold War Case Study* (Pittsburgh, 1988), 94-109; Mark H. Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance 1941-1953* (New York, 1987), 203-09; and U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, 2d Session, Final Report, Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Supplementary detailed Staff Reports on Foreign and Military Intelligence*, Book IV (Washington, D.C., 1976), 45, in which the overthrows of leftist governments in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954) are described as "two of the [Central Intelligence] Agency's boldest, most spectacular covert operations."

⁷⁰?? DATE ??, *KOI*, vol. 9, 77.

⁷¹18 July 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 18, 132.

case of a coup attempt. In view of this contradictory evidence, few people in the Kremlin could contradict Molotov, who stood on the old position.

"Now, as before," he lectured the ambassador, who cabled him about the meeting, "you do not wish to understand the essence in the relationship between the United States and England on this subject. "You should not forget that Mossadeq prepared the decision about liquidation of British oil concessions at the behest of or after clearing it with the United States so that to remove from the world market the strongest competitors of American oil monopoly." Molotov dismissed all intelligence reports about U.S. involvement into the anti-Mossadeq coup. "Americans, of course, can perform a role of friends of the British and produce an impression of American pressure on the Iranian government on behalf of the Britons."

It was vexed also by Mossadeq's insistence on cancellation of the Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1946 and abrogation of Soviet concessions in the southern Caspian Sea.⁷²

When General Zahedi seized power in Iran it evoked little concern among the leaders in Moscow, reeling after the anti-Beria coup. KI analysts at first wrote that the "correlation of forces" indicated the "weak position of the Zahedi government and the growth of public discontent with the dictatorial regime of the military-monarchist clique."⁷³ They also recommended that Moscow repudiate the calls for accommodation from the Shah and the new government; it would be better to shun them, to show the "Iranian people" that the Soviet Union opposed a return to an "imperialist diktat." It took some time for Moscow to realize that the removal of Mossadeq spelled the end of the special Soviet position in Iran and the beginning of a US-Iranian alliance. By the end of November KI experts had to concede the Soviet defeat in Iran. American influence in Iran (and Turkey) seemed established for years to come, while Soviet economic concessions in Iran had been terminated.⁷⁴

Guessing the Western strategy

In May of 1953 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed to hold an early summit, without an agenda, between Soviet and Western leaders. The Kremlin rulers could not agree on the true intentions of the old statesman. Some of them, probably Beria and Malenkov, welcomed the speech and gave it a good coverage in Soviet media. But Molotov and Khrushchev believed then

⁷²6 August 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 21-23.

⁷³"Vnutripoliticheskoe polozhenie i rasstanovka klassovikh sil v Irane" ["The Political Situation and Correlation of Class Forces in Iran"], 14 November 1953, *KI*, vol. 22, 87.

⁷⁴"Vneshnyaya politika pravitel'stva Zakhedi i vopros sovetsko-iranskikh otnoshenii" ["The Foreign Policy of the Zahedi Government and the Issue of Soviet-Iranian Relations"], 23 November 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 22, 191-207.

and later that Churchill just wanted to exploit Soviet weakness to obtain concessions on Western terms.

The KI estimates supported the cautious, alarmist interpretation. In May the KI reported to the Presidium that Churchill and Eisenhower wanted to take a wind out of Soviet peace initiative, preempt the idea of negotiations with Moscow and talk it to death.⁷⁵

In the wake of the uprising in the GDR and Adenauer's electoral triumph a KI analyst concluded that the US government "would undoubtedly step up its pressure on France and Italy in order to obtain the quickest ratification of the Bonn and Paris treaties." It would also "speed up a creation of [a] sovereign West German army." And "the Americans would be especially resistant," finally, "to Churchill's idea about a four-power 'summit' with an open agenda. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the British government to push forward this proposal."⁷⁶

By late October 1953 KI analysts had to admit that that they had painted Churchill's intentions in the too Machiavellian light. They admitted that Churchill was a sincere and rare advocate of detente in the West. "It has been proven from the documents," they acknowledged, "that Churchill's proposal had reflected ... his real views." He declared in a recent speech, the KI noted, that "We must do our best to avoid a slippery slope leading to war."⁷⁷

The KI even reconstructed Churchill's intentions in the form of "a plan." They believed it included the following points: first,

Between the European Defense Community, which would include a reunified Germany, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies on the other, a non-aggression treaty should be achieved. The United States, Great Britain and Canada would stand as guarantors of this treaty;

and second,

The Soviets would agree to accept an alignment of the reunified Germany with the Western powers; in exchange these powers and the all-German government would recognize the Eastern border of Germany along the Oder-Neisse line--considering it as the line dividing 'spheres of influence' between the USSR and the Western alliance.⁷⁸

⁷⁵16 May 1953, *KI*, vol. 16, 111-112.

⁷⁶?? DATE ??, *Ibid.*, vol. 20, 139-140.

⁷⁷"O pozitsiyakh zapadnikh derzhav po voprosu o 'garantiyakh bezopastnosti' Sovetskomu Soyuzu" ["On the Positions of the Western Powers on the Issue of 'Security Guarantees' for the Soviet Union"], 22 October 1953, *KI*, vol. 21, 112.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 114-115.

After the Berlin uprising and the elimination of Beria, however, a compromise along these lines became unthinkable in the Kremlin. Nobody, including Molotov, Khrushchev and even Malenkov was prepared to trade East Germany for any "security guarantees" from the West.

In the summer of 1953 Eisenhower concluded his "Project Solarium," a series of in-house seminars on strategy in the Cold War, by opting for containment against "liberation." For the Republican right wing it was a betrayal of electoral promises and "softness on Communism." It is not known if the Soviet leaders had any information on this decision in the White House, but to them American actions and intentions in summer-fall of 1953 were anything but soft. KI reports worried that the Berlin uprising had been the beginning of a global Western counteroffensive. "One can expect," warned one memorandum, "that the USA will attempt to stage provocations in Korea analogous to those they had caused in Berlin."⁷⁹ At the same time, the KI reported on US plans "to establish military, political and economic control over Indochina, and to exclude the influence of France there in the interests of American monopolies."⁸⁰

Analysts also pointed to danger in the Balkans. "The Americans," they wrote, "believe the creation of a Balkan alliance would strengthen the strategic position of NATO in the immediate proximity of the People's Democracies and would provide for the Western powers an offensive military grouping aimed at Central Europe." The KI feared that this alliance would become "a tool of the Western powers to exert pressure on the People's Democracies--primarily on Albania and Bulgaria." To the analysts it

represented a link [in the chain] of US government activities directed, according to the 'policy of liberation' proclaimed by Eisenhower and Dulles, toward subversion of the People's Democratic regimes in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe.⁸¹

In early September, a KI memorandum claimed that the United States was seeking "to turn Pakistan into one of its principal military bases on the borders of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China." The Americans expected, according to the KI, that the addition of Pakistan to their alliance system would force India to abandon its non-alignment policy.⁸² Indeed, what appeared to the White House as a "defensive perimeter strategy," the Kremlin viewed as continuing expansion of American influence.

⁷⁹"Pozitsia SShA po koreiskomu voprosi posle peremira" ["The U.S. Position on the Korean Issue After the Armistice"], 6 August 1953, Ibid., vol. 19, 18.

⁸⁰10 July 1953, Ibid., vol. 18, 68.

⁸¹"O yugoslavo-greko-turketskom bloke" ["On a Yugoslav-Greek-Turkish Bloc"], 17 July 1953, Ibid., **vol. ??**, 74-75 & 77.

⁸²8 September 1953, Ibid., vol. 20, 36 & 38-39.

These assessments must have contributed to the Soviets' reluctance--after their early favorable attitude--to go to Berlin for the quadripartite talks on Germany. In November KI analysts reported to the Presidium that at the conference of foreign ministers of three Western powers in London (16-18 October 1953),

more collusion took place among the Western powers, aimed at the disruption of constructive talks with the Soviet Union...The Churchill government...did not consider the current moment to be auspicious for negotiations with the USSR.⁸³

The German desk of KI seconded the warning. "By putting forward a proposal to hold a four-power conference on the German Question," it argued, "the Western powers are clearly planning the failure of this conference in advance." To participate in the Berlin conference under these conditions might help the West to discredit the Soviet peace offensive. If the conference should fail, the United States would be able to argue that negotiations with the Soviets were impossible and German rearmament was the only remaining option.⁸⁴ This assessment was essentially correct, as documents from the Eisenhower administration suggest.⁸⁵

Against this backdrop, the only bright spot for the Soviets was the detonation of what they called the first hydrogen bomb.⁸⁶ Soviet intelligence officers and diplomats reported with satisfaction that the Americans took it seriously and that in Western Europe it enhanced fears of a disastrous future war.⁸⁷ Malenkov was so enthusiastic about the bomb that he revealed its existence on August 8 in his address on foreign and domestic policies, several days before the device was tested. He took this opportunity to offer a skillful defense of the peace initiative in front of the hardliners present, arguing that the Soviet Union now could negotiate from a stronger position than ever. The relevant KI estimate reflected this attitude at the top. "Announcements of the hydrogen bomb test and the new types of atomic bombs in the Soviet Union enhanced even more the desire of the countries of Western Europe to agree with the USSR on disputed international questions." Analysts even ventured to suggest that the Soviet H-bomb had stopped the counteroffensive that the United States was preparing after the Berlin uprising.⁸⁸

⁸³"O pozitsii pravashchikh krogov Anglii v otnoshenii peregovorov s SSSR po uregulirovaniyu spornikh mezhdunaraodnikh voprosov" ["On the Position of the Ruling Circles of England Regarding Negotiations with the USSR for the Settlement of International Disputes"], 23 November 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 22, 181 & 190.

⁸⁴?? DATE ??, *Ibid.*, vol. 20, 139-140.

⁸⁵See *FRUS, 1952-1954*, vol. 7, Part 1 (Washington, D.C., 1986), 543, 670-72; Schwartz, *America's Germany*, 284-87; and Hershberg, "Explosion in the Offing," 544-45.

⁸⁶Although it was not a true thermonuclear "superbomb." See David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (New Haven, 2nd ed., 1984), 24.

⁸⁷Some results of this tracking were published in *Pravda*, 25 August 1953.

⁸⁸22 October 1953, *KI*, vol. 21, 115.

Malenkov's power, however, was already slipping away. In his struggle against Malenkov, Khrushchev had taken Molotov's side, and later accused Malenkov of lack of character in dealing with foreign and domestic problems. Intelligence estimates of the KI, MGB, and GRU served as arguments against "further concessions to imperialists." As the first year without Stalin drew to a close, the United States, "as before," did not want "businesslike talks with the USSR."⁸⁹

Conclusion

What this first glimpse into the KI estimates tell us about the role of Soviet intelligence at this moment of the Cold War? One can agree with Raymond Garthoff that it is difficult to judge from the documentary record, even if supplemented by personal observation and experience, the impact of intelligence assessment on policymaking.⁹⁰ But the comparison of the KI record with some available sources on the assumptions and attitudes of the Soviet rulers provide some tentative conclusions.

The pressure of ideology and terror had considerable effect on the KI reporting. Stalin's impact on the intelligence analysis was visible and highly damaging in many ways: in terms of loaded phraseology and preconceived "theoretical" conclusions about international trends and developments, but also in terms of hypercentralized organization and preprogramming to satisfy the wishful thinking of the leadership. The experiment in the hypercentralization that brought the "small" KI to life betrayed the desire of Stalin's leadership to reduce multi-voiced, contradictory information about the world to combed, trimmed, and presented as a monochrome hard-line picture.

It is obvious that sometimes the KI officials wanted to hedge the bet in their analysis or even to tailor it down to Stalin's assumptions and expectations. Stalin's death and the struggle for succession created a considerable room between intelligence estimates on one hand, and assumptions and expectations of various political leaders on the other hand. When Stalin was alive the KI experts, consciously or not, shared his fear of immediate American threat. Without him they continued to keep their eyes on some imaginary "general line," but the absence of clear consensus among the new leaders, in fact an acute struggle between some of them, made this behavior irrelevant and, as in the episode with Beria, risky.

Declassified records of the U.S. foreign policy show that most of KI assessments were not far off the mark, especially on American actions and intentions about NATO, Germany and Eastern Europe. Some may even find these reports prescient. Indeed, Eisenhower and Dulles did not want to negotiate with the Soviets and were more concerned about preservation of unity in

⁸⁹December 1953, *Ibid.*, vol. 23, 49.

⁹⁰Garthoff, *Assessing the Adversary*, 51.

NATO and West German rearmament. The KI correctly picked the seriousness of strains in Western alliance. The continuity between the Eisenhower administration and the Truman administration encompassed, in fact, low-risk, long-term efforts to erode Soviet control in Eastern Europe. And the encirclement of the Soviet Union with bases and blocs did materialize, although not to complete satisfaction of its architects.

Some American diplomatic historians might suggest that the KI reflected "legitimate" security concerns of Moscow. They might wonder: Where were the signs of distorted, ideologized prism, where was that specific Cold War mentality commonly attributed to Soviet thinking of Stalin's era? Where is this "clogging of minds" by the years of Stalinism? The answer can be simple. On each sides in the Cold War the intelligence estimates often looked fair and justified because they reflected only one side of confrontational interaction. They did not and could not take into account the legitimate security interests and concerns of an adversary, because they commonly treated the other side as an implacable and ruthless enemy. The very methodology of these estimates contains, as many know, the bias in favor of "worst case" analysis and continuity, against a possibility of a radical departure from established patterns of international behavior. From this viewpoint the KI assessments, however correct in substance, were part of the diabolical mechanism of perpetuation of the Cold War. In 1953 they tended to discourage any departure from Stalin's foreign policy. It certainly happened to Soviet policies with regard to two crucial countries to the West and the South from Moscow.

How much did relations between the KI and the post-Stalin Soviet leadership differ from the symbioses between the U.S. intelligence and political leadership? The main difference it seems is in the absence of the intermediary analytical institutions like National Security Council or National Intelligence Board which, with various degree of success interprets the "raw" intelligence data and compares assessments of various branches of intelligence., could not tell Party bosses that their actions were wrong or had backfired. Nor could it suggest options for future actions. Its analytical role was far more modest: the purification of data and removal of disinformation.

My interviews with KI veterans added another element to the picture of the top leadership, what I call "informed ignorance." Soviet intelligence analysts competed for the ear of Politburo members, especially that of Number One. This bureaucratic competition, among other things, helped prohibit effective coordination of the information flowing to the top levels. As a result, Stalin was both overwhelmed and ignorant at the same time, and the system itself resembled a prehistoric dinosaur with huge physical mass, a long neck, and a tiny brain. Often Party leaders' decisions were not the result of an analytical process--sorting out facts and factors and choosing the optimal mix--but of heuristic reactions, based on selected events or even momentary moods.

, we can see that the war scare in the Kremlin was genuine. It was based only in part on accurate intelligence about US actions and intentions; to a large extent it was based on actions and intentions *attributed* by the Kremlin to Washington, Bonn, London, and Paris.

A distorted image of the adversary and its intentions was the most lasting legacy Stalin left to his successors. It was the product of a consensus that did not die with Stalin. The KI documents were largely written by a young generation of analysts who had imbibed Stalinist dogma so thoroughly that it clouded their analyses, even after 5 March 1953 and even with access to the best information about the West. They had to play by the rules of the game, but also they believed in those rules. Only a strong, new despot at the top could challenge the existing consensus on the causes and dynamics of the Cold War. But, as Beria found out too late, it was difficult even for him to alter underlying assumptions when he wanted to do so for his own tactical purposes.

The hypothesis about a Soviet GRIT strategy does not fare well in light of the KI papers. The Soviet peace offensive was more the product of traditional Stalinist political infighting than of the "new political thinking" of later days, which indeed serves as an example of GRIT. The collective leadership was not prepared to go very far to meet Western demands, for it feared imperialist "collusion"--another legacy of the early Cold War and Stalin's mentality. It preferred to exploit short-term discord among NATO allies, invariably in a manner counterproductive to the presumed long-term aim of detente with the West.

It was not only the substance of intelligence reports that affected--however marginally--decisionmaking in the Kremlin. It was also the *absence* of analysis and the stifling weight of Stalinist political and ideological preconceptions that hampered intelligence reports. Stalin's foreign policy remained, with some minor exceptions, a "sacred cow" after his death. Even an improvement of relations with Yugoslavia had to wait for two years and the bold action of Khrushchev. Consequently, no assessment of past actions and mistakes had been made by that time.

There was no effective mechanism in the Soviet leadership to formulate and implement long-term tasks in foreign policy. There was a virtual ban on policy planning and forecasting. Neither KI nor the other intelligence bodies appear to have drafted anything close to the "National Intelligence Estimates" presented to the US government. Although KI assessments were regular and covered an exceedingly wide array of countries and issues, almost all of them bore the marks of ad hoc writing and limited, disjointed vision. The reader is often puzzled by the endless incongruities, the scarcity of analysis, and the surfeit of standard lines borrowed from official documents and newspapers. Many insights and intuitions were correct, but they did not go far enough. They were pieces of a puzzle that nobody put together. There were all too few attempts to project intelligence into the future, and nobody formulated scenarios or guidelines for what might happen

in the next one to three years. KI intelligence was a perfect example of analysis without past or future--even the German threat did not sufficiently stir Soviet imaginations to yield historical parallels or predictions.

But if we return to the historians' debates, where can we suggest that KI intelligence had some, if not a decisive impact on Soviet conduct? First, the Soviets were not prepared (either ideologically or politically) to "pay a price" for detente with the United States. Still, in the spring of 1953, there was enough confusion and turmoil in the Kremlin to allow the adversary some benefit of the doubt. But intelligence assessments of Eisenhower, Dulles, and Bohlen, as well as of US intentions in late summer and fall, tended to bear out the new Soviet leaders' fears that a relaxation of tensions was impossible because of US hostility and US attempts to take advantage of Soviet weaknesses.

Second, the attempts of Soviet diplomacy and propaganda to exploit "imperialist contradictions" were primarily aimed at preventing West German rearmament. But the Soviets clearly overplayed their hand, and they realized that fact after the bloody events of June 1953 in East Berlin. Mistaken assessments regarding US involvement in those events no doubt contributed to their traumatic impact on the Soviet leadership. Their worst fears about the Eisenhower administration's "liberation" seemed vindicated. This intelligence strengthened arguments against German reunification and in support of the East German regime. At the same time some minds in Moscow concluded that the Berlin uprising rendered West German rearmament much more difficult to forestall.

Third, Soviet intelligence on the Anglo-American plot in Iran contributed to prejudice against Mossadeq and probably strengthened the hand of those who wanted to support the communist Tudeh Party instead. As an indirect result, the Soviets lost their historic positions in this strategically important country.

Fourth and finally, intelligence about reactions in the West to the Soviets' explosion of the "first hydrogen bomb" helped reduce Soviet fears of a US political offensive after Berlin. The intelligence in this instance was clearly tailored to the leadership's expectations. The result was a return to diplomacy of strength that must have reduced the inclination of the Soviet rulers--however questionable in the first place--to use small steps and concessions to improve the international position of the country and break the diplomatic deadlock inherited from Stalin.