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THE STRENGTH AND CAPABILITIES OF SOVIET
BLOC FORCES TO CONDUCT MILITARY OPERATIONS
AGAINST NATO

THE PROBLEM

To analyze the strength and capabilities of Soviet Bloc forces to conduct military operations against NATO during the period 1951-1954, including the capacity of the Soviet Bloc to maintain and increase these forces after the outbreak of war.

ANALYSIS

See the Enclosure.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The USSR has at present and will probably have through mid-1954 military strength of such magnitude as to pose a constant and serious threat to the security of the NATO powers, especially in view of the aggressive nature of Soviet objectives and policies.
2. Politically, economically, and militarily the Soviet Bloc is capable of undertaking a major war. Its over-all strength and war potential should increase considerably by mid-1954.
 - a. Despite continued political tensions within the Soviet Bloc, both the Soviet population and the European Satellites are under firm Kremlin control. In the event of war various internal tensions will tend to become more acute, but they probably will not become serious enough to pose a major obstacle to Soviet ability to sustain a major war effort until

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the latent disruptive elements within the Soviet Bloc acquire a reasonable expectation and hope of the ultimate victory of the anti-Soviet forces. The potential of such disruptive elements will probably increase substantially and at an accelerated pace if and as the Soviet Bloc suffers damaging internal reverses.

b. The Soviet economy is already at a high state of war-readiness and its productive capacity is such as to enable the USSR to undertake a major war effort. In the event of war, the Soviet economy, unless crippled by a strategic air offensive, could support a substantial increase in war production.

c. The over-all conventional military strength in being of the Soviet orbit is the greatest in the world today. While the personnel strength of the Soviet Bloc forces should increase only moderately through mid-1954, the completion of current programs should materially improve their mobilization potential and combat effectiveness. Soviet atomic capabilities, already substantial, should also materially increase.

3. In view of the high state of war-readiness of the Soviet economy and armed forces, the USSR is at present capable of initiating hostilities against the NATO powers with little or no warning. It now has the capability of simultaneously conducting a series of land campaigns against Western Europe and the Middle East, as well as air and submarine attacks against the UK, the US and Canada, and NATO sea communications. By mid-1954, growing Soviet military and economic strength, particularly in atomic weapons, should materially enhance Soviet ability to conduct these operations.

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