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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE
CURRENT SITUATION



NIE-11

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The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force participated in the preparation of this estimate and concur in it. This paper is based on information available on 1 December 1950.

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SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. Developments in Korea and Manchuria indicate that the purpose of the Chinese Communist intervention is to render the UN position in Korea untenable.
2. The attitude of the Chinese Communist regime and urgent defensive preparations in China show that this intervention was undertaken in realization of the risk of general war between the United States and Communist China and perhaps in expectation of such a development.
3. It is highly improbable that the Chinese Communist regime would have accepted this risk without explicit assurance of effective Soviet support.
4. The Soviet Union will probably:
 - a. Continue to support Chinese Communist operations in Korea by the provision of suitable materiel, technical personnel, and even "volunteer" units, as necessary.
 - b. Provide aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery, with trained personnel, as necessary for the defense of targets in China against UN air attack.
 - c. Come openly to the military support of Communist China, under the terms of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, in the event of major US (UN) operations against Chinese territory.
5. The Soviet rulers, in directing or sanctioning the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea, must have appreciated the increased risk of global war and have felt ready to accept such a development.
6. Intelligence is inconclusive as to whether or not the Soviet intention is to precipitate a global war now. If the Soviet rulers do now intend to bring on such a war, they might well prefer that it should develop from the situation in East Asia. On the other hand, even if they do not intend to precipitate a global war, they must estimate that a broadening of the Korean war into a general war between the United States and China would be advantageous to the USSR.
7. Whether or not a global war were to ensue, the USSR could reasonably hope to derive the following advantages from the development of a general war between the United States and Communist China.
 - a. The diversion of effective US and allied forces to operations in an indecisive theater and their attrition and containment there.
 - b. The creation of dissension between the United States and its allies, which is more feasible with respect to Asian than to European issues.
 - c. The disruption of the coherence achieved by the UN with respect to the original Communist aggression in Korea.
 - d. The obstruction of plans for the defense of Western Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty.
 - e. The speedier achievement of immediate Communist objectives in Korea and Southeast Asia.
8. On the other hand, the USSR may estimate that the United States would decline the immediate challenge in Asia, in which case the USSR could proceed to collect the immediate stakes in Korea and Indochina.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

9. The Soviet rulers have resolved to pursue aggressively their world-wide attack on the power position of the United States and its allies regardless of the possibility that global war may result, although they may estimate that the Western Allies would seek to avoid such a development. Further direct or indirect Soviet aggression in Europe and Asia is

likely, regardless of the outcome of the Korean situation.

10. The minimal purpose of the USSR in the current situation is to render untenable the UN position in Korea.

11. The USSR is prepared to accept, and may be seeking to precipitate, a general war between the United States and China, despite the inherent risk of global war.

12. The possibility cannot be disregarded that the USSR may already have decided to precipitate global war in circumstances most advantageous to itself through the development of general war in Asia. We are unable, on the basis of present intelligence, to determine the probability of such a decision having in fact been made.