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14 November 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Report of DCI Ad Hoc Panel on Status of the
Soviet ICBM Program

1. This Panel, consisting of the below membership and meeting at your request, has reviewed available evidence relating to the Soviet ICBM program. We have also reviewed the Guided Missile Intelligence Committee (GMIC) report on this subject, dated 5 November 1958, and have discussed their report with the GMIC members.

Mr. L. A. Hyland, Chairman
Dr. James W. McRae
Dr. Jack E. Froehlich
Dr. Reuben F. Mettler
Mr. Charles R. Irvine
Brig. Gen. Osmond J. Ritland

2. Based on the foregoing, this Panel has concluded that:

a. The Soviets have a high priority ICBM program initiated some years ago. Their test program currently appears to be about 12 months ahead of the US ICBM test program. For want of hard facts on the extension of this test program into operational capability, it is only safe to assume that this inequity will carry forward for the next few years.

b. The GMIC report, including the footnotes, is, in general, as good an overall estimate of the situation as can be made at this time, in view of the quality and quantity of the available evidence. However, a few remarks are warranted.

c. The GMIC report, including the footnotes, sets forth variations of viewpoint regarding the date of the ICBM IOC, (initial operational capability) ranging from the latter part of 1958 to the latter part of 1959. While neither extreme can, at this time, be ruled out as being incorrect, the Panel believes that currently available evidence will support no more precise a statement than the following:

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"The Soviet IOC will probably occur sometime during 1959. While we cannot discount the possibility that this IOC might yet be established in 1958, we believe this possibility degraded by reason of the small number of test firings to date."

d. The important date to be established is not considered to be the IOC (for in terms of military significance a few missiles are not important) but rather the date when the Soviets have in being an operational force armed with at least a hundred ICBMs. In this area, intelligence is almost completely non-existent. Nevertheless, on such associated evidence as does exist, and on the basis of the complexities of the task to be accomplished, we believe the Soviets could build to a weapons system capability with about 500 missiles by mid-1962, although, with over-riding priority and success in their test and production program, such might be accomplished as early as mid-1961. Assuming the mid-1962 date as their goal for this particular number of weapons, an operational force with about 100 weapons could probably be in existence by late 1960 or early 1961.

e. In view of the significance which the status of the Soviet ICBM program has to the national security of the United States, we find the quantity and quality of the total evidence available to be dangerously unsatisfactory. In particular, is the situation true, regarding evidence on production facilities, training and deployment. This statement also applies with equal validity to evidence on the IRBM family (700 and 1100 n.m.) of ballistic missiles, which can probably now be employed to the great disadvantage of ourselves and Allies throughout Europe, England, North Africa and Asia.

3. This Panel recommends that all practicable actions be taken on an urgent basis to improve the intelligence collection system to where it can supply adequate amounts of data relating to the Soviet ICBM program. In particular, means must be found to obtain evidence on Soviet production facilities, training and deployment actions.

a. All collection concepts should be vigorously pushed for example: The use of high altitude rockets on the USSR periphery equipped to observe powered flight telemetry and other performance parameters; exploitation of satellite collection methods on an expedited basis; continued development of acoustic and infrared devices; more carefully developed high altitude balloons; vigorous research and development to overcome the increasing difficulty of collection.

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b. Recognizing the difficulties in covert operations, the Panel nevertheless suggests that more of such activities be specifically focused on the task of obtaining evidence on long range missile production, training activities, and deployment activities, and that strong support be given to new covert techniques.

c. Additional recommendations will be supplied to you in personal discussion.

4. On balance the Panel believes that collection must be more vigorously pushed, that the risks to US security of not obtaining adequate information on the Soviet ICBM program exceed the current risks inherent in utilization of certain collection techniques. We believe that it is becoming increasingly harder to obtain evidence and all methods should be exploited while still usable.


L. A. HYLAND
Chairman

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