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POLITICAL WORKING GROUP

Draft Summary Report on Exchange of Views
on Soviet Foreign Policy

The Political Working Group will meet on Monday, 19th November, 1951 at 10.30 a.m., at 13, Belgrave Square, S.W.1., to continue their work on a summary report on the Council Deputies' exchange of views on Soviet foreign policy. The text of the working paper, as amended in discussion Friday, is attached.

(Signed) L.M. PEART

13, Belgrave Square,
London, S.W.1.

Draft summary report on the Council Deputies'
exchange of views on Soviet foreign policy

I. Main basis of Soviet foreign policy

1. The basic objectives of Soviet foreign policy are the maintenance and strengthening of the Soviet regime and the expansion of international Communism.

2. This policy is at once revolutionary and traditionally imperialistic in character and is thus able to use the disruptive forces and messianic doctrines of international Communism in the service of Russian imperialism. The long-term objective of the Soviet Union is world-wide domination through the establishment of a Communist world order, and for this purpose Communist parties outside Russia provide the USSR with instruments of foreign policy not normally available to a national state.

3. The prime consideration of Soviet policy is the desire to safeguard the USSR as a base from which to spread Communism throughout the world. This involves securing the strategic approaches to the Soviet Union and preventing the establishment in Europe or Asia of forces capable of threatening the USSR. For this purpose the Soviet Union seeks to consolidate Russian control over the states on the Soviet periphery and to obstruct the growth of Western strength and unity.

4. Soviet foreign policy is conditioned on the one hand by the Communist belief in the inherent antagonism of the Communist and non-Communist worlds and on the other by a doctrine of historical determinism, which postulates the eventual collapse of the non-Communist powers and thus suggests that time is on the side of Communism.

/II. Principal

II: Principal aims of Soviet foreign policy

(a) Eastern Europe

5. The Soviet aims in Eastern Europe are to consolidate Soviet control over the satellites and to develop their economic, political and military integration with the Soviet Union so as to make the maximum use of their industrial potential, to seal the area off from Western contact and to reinforce the Soviet military potential. In Finland, the Soviet aim is to keep the country neutral and open to immediate use by Soviet forces in the event of war. In Yugoslavia, the Soviet aim is to eliminate Marshal Tito's regime and to replace it by a government subservient to Moscow. Short of a concerted satellite attack on Yugoslavia (which is a possibility) the aim is unlikely to be achieved in the near future. In the meantime, Soviet policy relies on economic, diplomatic and psychological pressure and internal subversion, with a view to discouraging any deviationist tendency in the satellite states.

(b) Western Europe (including Germany)

6. Morally, politically and economically, Western Europe is of profound importance in the world struggle. It is therefore a vital aim of Soviet policy both to weaken Western Europe and to increase Soviet influence in the area. To do this, the Soviet Union seeks to divide Western Europe from the United States and to prevent the successful execution of the NATO defence programme, to hamper economic recovery and development and, in the longer run, to bring Communist governments into power in countries of the area.

7. Apart from its own potential Germany is, in the Soviet view, the key to Europe, and the Soviet aim is therefore to bring the whole country under a Communist Government subservient

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to Moscow. The Soviet Zone is being transformed into a satellite state to serve as the base for this operation. Meanwhile, the immediate aim is to prevent Western Germany from being integrated effectively into Western Europe, and for this purpose the Soviet Government plays up German fears of war and desires for unity.

(c) Far East

8. Soviet policy in the Far East is broadly aimed at eliminating Western influence and establishing Communist regimes under Soviet control. To this end the USSR, like China, is supporting violent but limited warfare throughout the area, especially in Korea, Indo-China and Malaya. The Soviet's alliance with China is of vital importance but is still for the most part an unknown factor. The immediate aims are to consolidate China's membership of the Soviet bloc and, consistent with this, to develop China's economic and military potential, to overthrow with Chinese co-operation the present Governments in South-East Asia and replace them by Communist regimes, and to promote the maximum tension and unrest throughout the area in order to deny its economic resources to the free world and divert Western military effort. The question is, however, whether there is sufficient Soviet confidence in long-run Chinese co-operation to give China a relatively free hand. With regard to Japan, the Soviet aim is to neutralise the country in order to prevent its becoming a threat to Chinese and Soviet security, and ultimately to harness its industrial power.

(d) Middle East

9. An important traditional element in Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East is to prevent any hostile power from gaining control over the Straits. Similarly, it wishes to
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prevent the emergence of any military threat from Turkey, Persia or Afghanistan. Soviet policy seeks further, to undermine Western influence in the area, to deny to the West the resources and communications of the area, and ultimately to secure control of all these countries by increasing unrest and by exploiting nationalism and anti-Western feeling.

(e) Dependent and Colonial territories

10. In the dependent and Colonial territories, which Communist theory regards as one of the chief economic and strategic bases of "imperialist" power, Soviet policy attempts to foster national aspirations for independence in order to weaken Western influence.

(f) United Nations

11. The USSR regards the United Nations merely as an instrument in its foreign policy adapted to serve three basic and overlapping objectives: (a) the protection of fundamental Soviet stated interests; (b) aggravation of differences in the non-Soviet world, and (c) world-wide dissemination of Soviet propaganda. The value of the United Nations to the Soviet Union has somewhat decreased, largely as a result of the General Assembly's increased authority in security matters. The possibility of a Soviet withdrawal, and the proclamation of the World Peace Council as a substitute, even though it appears less likely now than some months ago, cannot be discounted.

III. Methods of the Soviet Union to achieve its aims

12. The Soviet Union seeks to attain its objectives if possible by action not seriously risking total war. It is thus likely that the Soviet Union would prefer to rely on "cold war" methods, as exemplified particularly in the increased

tempo of the Soviet "peace" campaign. It may be assumed also that armed revolt and civil war, and possibly the use of non-Soviet military force, which go somewhat beyond the methods of the "cold war" but fall short of actual hostilities on the part of the Soviet Union, will continue to be encouraged wherever feasible, since they involve little or no risk to the USSR.

13. It can be expected, however, that if the Soviet Union believes it profitable, or necessary in its vital interests, it will be willing to resort to armed force carrying with it the danger of war. The most serious likelihood of the Russians engaging their own forces would arise either out of a miscalculation of Western reactions to a given situation or out of a conviction that they themselves were shortly to be attacked.

IV. Soviet tactics

14. In spite of the almost complete immunity of the Soviet Government to the pressure of public opinion in the Soviet Union and its apparent insensitivity to outside influence, there is no evidence for the existence of any planned "timetable" of Soviet policy. In view of the opportunistic nature of Soviet policy and the conviction that history is working to the long-run advantage of the USSR, it may be assumed that Soviet tactics will be determined largely by Soviet reaction to Western policies. On the one hand, this would mean that the strengthening of the West and a clear indication of its readiness to resist encroachments on its vital interests would serve to deter the USSR from going beyond "cold war" methods. On the other hand, it is possible that, in creating positions of strength, Western action may lead the USSR to the conclusion that its own vital interests are being threatened to an extent justifying military counter-action, even at the risk of general war.