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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Washington 25, D.C.
Office of the Deputy Director (Intelligence)

5 November 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Robert Cutler
Mr. Fredrick M. Dearborn, Jr.
Mr. Gerard C. Smith
Mr. Karl G. Harr, Jr.
Rear Admiral C. D. Triebel

I believe the attached vade mecum is well worth your perusing and pondering. Its author has been for the past four years in charge of our major analytical Soviet-Bloc shop and is now preparing to depart for an important [redacted] assignment. His background includes historical training and authorship of some of the volumes in the official World War II army histories.

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/s/

ROBERT AMORY, JR.

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33546 By: Dorothy Johnson
Date: 03-01-2017

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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
S/AE

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31 October 1957

The USSR: Primer for Planning

Every departing Soviet expert ought to be entitled to one Parthian shot. Here is mine, a capsule strategic appreciation of the Soviet Union.

These are my personal views and they have not been coordinated with anyone.

1. The USSR is and is likely to remain a powerful nation, a going concern that is able to command great human and natural resources.
2. The USSR has many political and economic shortcomings and Soviet leaders will not accomplish all they promise. Conflicts over the allocation of internal political power and over priorities or marginal choices either in economic planning or in foreign policy will occur from time to time, causing Zhukovs or even Khrushchevs to topple.
3. On the otherhand the USSR as a great national power will not collapse of its own accord, however convenient this would be for us.
4. In these circumstances chances are the Soviet regime will continue to impress their own people and foreign observers with Soviet industrial and technological growth.
5. As a result of a greater sense of security and a natural waning of revolutionary zeal, the USSR will gradually evolve in the direction of more decent and humane political conduct internally and eventually toward more civilized and bearable behavior internationally.
6. Nevertheless, the Soviet regime will for a long time remain fundamentally hostile and competitive in its dealings with the United States. Soviet leaders, whoever they may be probably will, for reasons of state as well as Communist ideology, try to increase Soviet influence over other nations wherever and whenever it can without jeopardizing its own survival or substantially reducing its own prestige and power.

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7. Because of the risk of destruction and because of a vague but real sense that time will bring on inevitable triumph for Communism, Soviet leaders will avoid nuclear war with the United States. They believe, however, that their own military strength is now adequate to deter the United States from using its own nuclear strength to settle any strategic conflicts between the two countries. This gives the USSR a shield for vigorous efforts to increase Soviet influence through traditional power-diplomacy, economic penetration, and political subversion.
8. The United States can only try to eliminate the Soviet competition or meet it.
9. To hope to eliminate it by political needling and propaganda is sheer wishful thinking. The most we can accomplish in this way is to encourage favorable political evolutionary trends in the USSR.
10. To try to eliminate Soviet competition by military force would result in the destruction of most of what we would be fighting to preserve, not only in disputed areas but quite possibly in the U.S.
11. The only alternative for the United States is to live with the Russians.
12. If we are going to live with them comfortably we are going to have to negotiate with them in order to find out in detail what makes them tick and in order to resolve or at least dampen down dangerous conflicts of interest.
13. This is "peaceful coexistence," which unhappily, we let them name and take credit for inventing. Actually it is nothing but a description of a great-power relationship between two powers unable to destroy each other but divided by vast cultural and political gulf.
14. It is the USSR which is yielding--abandoning its pristine revolutionary hostility--in undertaking to negotiate with the United States as one great power with another.
15. US-Soviet negotiations would not achieve mutual trust between the United States and the Soviet Union, certainly not in the next decade, if ever. They would, however, progressively insure the removal of the US-Soviet strategic conflict from the outright military arena--so long as modern technology leaves military power roughly balanced--and the transfer of the competition to the political and economic arena.

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16. Not because it is either easy or pleasant but because there is no other winning game to play, the United States should reasonably soon take the initiative in negotiating a modus vivendi with the USSR.

17. Leaving aside the long-range, somewhat nebulous ideological goals of ultimate Communist global triumphs, the strategic demands of the USSR at present are fairly limited to the following:

(a) recognition of the Soviet Union as a great power almost equal if not equal to the United States;

(b) negotiation of differences on the basis of the territorial and strategic status quo, with bargains struck on a strict quid pro quo basis. These terms are stiff but they are unlikely to get less stiff.

18. Taking the initiative in negotiating with the USSR would at least establish in world opinion that the United States is no less willing than others to settle strategic conflicts without resort to war.

19. Western material goods, technology, and political customs are at this point in history superior to anything the Communists have to offer.

20. It is only necessary for the United States and its allies to mobilize their richer resources and exploit their broader political and social experience to prove they can build better societies than the Soviet-Communist system can.

21. This effort will cost the United States money and the time of gifted people, but not nearly so much as a war would take. It requires that the United States maintain a booming economy at home and support a substantial foreign economic development program abroad. It, of course, also requires careful strategic planning, astute diplomacy and close consultation with friendly nations.

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22. The next few years, during which a rough balance of military power exists and Soviet economic strength is still inferior to American strength, is the best time there is ever likely to be for the United States to enter vigorously into a negotiated truce and politico-economic competition with the USSR.

23. The effort would be worthwhile if it succeeded merely in depriving Soviet leaders of their favorite image of the United States as trigger-happy warmongers. It would increase American popularity in the mutual or uncommitted areas. It might also weaken the hands of Communist leaders in domestic planning, since they have always relied on the capitalistic "devil" to justify the extraordinary political and economic deprivations imposed on their citizens. Intellectuals and bureaucrats seeking a better life would certainly have greater leverage to use in moving Soviet society toward the normal life.

24. In any case, in a fair conflict of dollar versus ruble and political enlightenment versus Communist dictatorship, the United States ought to win hands down. What is needed is to accept the Soviet challenge and vigorously proceed to fight, not World War III, nor even the cold war of the late Stalinist period, but cool war of competitive coexistence.

/s/
RAY S. CLINE

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