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REPORT ENTITLED "A WAR BETWEEN THE WESTERN POWERS
AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER"
BY LT. GENERAL JODL, RETIRED, GERMAN ARMY

Note by the Secretaries

The enclosed study, forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the Chief of Naval Operations, is circulated for information.

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Joint Secretariat

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J O D L
Lt. GENERAL (Retired)

...August 1946

A WAR BETWEEN THE WESTERN POWERS AND THE SOVIET UNION
IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER
(A STRATEGIC STUDY)

I do not put these thoughts on paper because I desire such a war for it would destroy my Fatherland completely; but I believe that the political and military differences between the capitalistic economic system of the Democracies and Soviet Collectivism are not to be reconciled. Perhaps there is at the back of both the powerful popular movements the overwhelming thought that peace is to be enforced upon the world through the unlimited power of a single idea; perhaps it is only the totalitarian demands of the Communist belief which, in its revolutionary dynamics will one day burst its political bonds and enforce its realization by a third World War. One thing is certain, that both Systems have recognized each other as exasperating, irreconcilable enemies ever since they met eye to eye over the corpse of their destroyed common enemy. This war will come as sure as the "Amen" pronounced in church, and at the very moment when the Soviet Union believes that the most advantageous conditions for victory are at hand. There are only two possibilities for escape from it, 1) either that STALIN does not believe in a victory over his adversaries, or 2) that his death results in political disorders in the Soviet Union which paralyze its military and political impetus.

I have executed here in summary form how such a war may be conducted in the near future and how the prospects of a victory could be allotted to both sides.

I am aware of the risks of such a judgment because important factors for a careful estimation of the situation are lacking to me, as well as an exact knowledge of the strength and disposition of the opposing forces on land, at sea, and in the air. But I knew their strength when they still fought unitedly against the German Wehrmacht; I know their armament and their equipment, their fighting spirit and their guiding principles, and I believe that I also have a corresponding picture

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ential of both parties and of the military evaluation of the terrain upon which will be enacted such a dramatic fight.

Thus I know the opposing partners from personal experience in the fight against Germany - whereas they know each other only as Allies who, in a very loose strategic connection, refused each other an exact insight into their means of power.

These are the grounds which encourage me to make an estimate of the military situation over whose accuracy or inaccuracy, as always in war, the historic course of events will decide.

I. THE STRENGTH AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE FORCES OF WAR

I do not know the present-day strength of the English, American, French and Soviet Forces. I do not know how many divisions have been redeployed and how far the reconstruction of the French Army has progressed. I only know that the Russian-occupied Eastern-European territory is strongly garrisoned and that when the armies of Soviet Russia receive their orders to begin their advance to the West between the Baltic and the Alps that they will have, without doubt, a superiority in numbers amounting to three to one or even more, on land. At least 25,000 heavy tanks and a fantastic confidence in victory, and the will to win will increase still further the power of this overwhelming superiority in numbers. The equipment and training of this strongest of armies that the world has yet seen is such that even in winter its full operational mobility remains.

Entirely different therefrom is the relative strength of the opposing Air Forces. Their present-day disposition, the degree of their preparedness, and their strength are unknown to me, it is true, but the following seems to me to be indisputably established: The Soviet Union has never owned a Bomber Fleet capable of independent operational air war. It has, in

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General, only had tactical tasks to carry out within the frame of battle decisions. The Russian fighter planes were, even at the war's end, inferior or at most, equal to the German fighter planes. They can, therefore, not compare with the English-American fighter planes, neither in personnel nor material. Russian radio-guided or jet aircraft had not been observed. Russia will make every effort to overcome her air inferiority. She will therefore attract German fliers and engineers and will not rest until she has solved the mystery of the atom bomb or has obtained it otherwise. But even if Russia does not succeed in this, or perhaps not for a long time, the mere fact that the atom bomb is in the possession of the Anglo-Saxon Powers forces Russia to enter into competition in air armament with these Powers. Also, because the atom bomb must be brought to its target. And in a decisive phase of the war only that side will have success with it which possesses air supremacy. Even if it should be possible to house the atom bomb in a rocket, air superiority still is the main advantage for the effectiveness of such long range rocket bombing.

Certainly some years will go by before the Soviet Union will succeed to build up in spite of her political and economic energy in Air Force equal to the American-English Air Forces. In this I believe to find the main reason, but certainly not the only one, that the USSR has until now maintained a waiting position militarily, and only behaved badly under unfavorable circumstances.

In the event of a war with the Anglo-Saxon Powers Russia is hopelessly inferior in the air.

The same applies to the strength relation at sea; neither in the Baltic nor in the Arctic has Russia any forces worth mentioning, not counting its over-age U-boats. At no place are there any worthwhile or vital operational targets for the Anglo-Saxon Sea Powers. A landing from the sea is neither needful

nor possible for Russia. The Russian Far Eastern Fleet is not in the position to become active operationally. It can be destroyed in short order by air attacks coming from Japanese land bases. This hopeless situation at sea is of less significance than her inferiority in the air.

But what has been said previously of the atom bomb applies also, if not in the same measure, to the new U-boat which Germany developed towards the end of the war. To develop and build in great numbers this modern war weapon with its great speed when submerged will be the most urgent task of the Soviet Navy Department. There can be no doubt, and my observations in my first encounter with the Soviet Commission in May 1945 prove this, that Russia has already made and will continue to make the greatest efforts to realize this aim. But this will also take years, even with the notable help which German Navy Officers and Navy Engineers will have to contribute.

In conclusion I arrive in this short and incomplete review over the relative strength situation at the following results:

THE SOVIET ARMY CAN NOT BE OPPOSED BY THE WESTERN POWERS WITH ANY COMPARABLY EQUIVALENT STRENGTH. IN CONTRAST TO THIS THE ANGLO-AMERICAN AIR SUPREMACY IS INCONTESTABLE. BUT THIS POSITION WILL CHANGE FROM YEAR TO YEAR FOR ALL THREE POWERS AND IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET UNION.

What operational consequences are to be drawn out of this situation for the opposing war plans have to be investigated at a later date.

Before then we must direct our attention also to the questions of morale, war economy, and political factors which are an important part of all strategic planning.

II. THE MORALE, WAR ECONOMY AND POLITICAL FACTORS

The soldier fights and dies only in the fulfilment of a sacred duty, in the grip of a great ideal, or also because of the iron-like pressure of a force whose threat of death carries more certainty than the hazards of battle. The Russian soldier is

under the influence of all these factors and will, therefore, be an excellent fighter; we learned to know him in the fortunes and misfortunes of the battle for almost four years as such. His primitiveness and simplicity are unequalled by any soldier on earth. He meets with the war fatigue of more civilized, more demanding soldiers who, away from home for years yearn to return there and its bourgeois life; surely, they too are brave and proud out of their experiences of victorious campaigns, but they are already used to easy victories over an already mortally struck opponent, they do not know the terror that a victorious Red Army drives before it, nor the fight against overpowering odds which gives no respite, not even in the thickest blizzards. The soldiers of the USA, England and France are also bearers of an ideal, but without the aggressive, fascinating power of Communism. Only the French soldier fights in such a way in the European Theater which he considers necessary for his country and his existence. But, is his political core still sound or has it already become diseased by the germs of putrefaction? I do not know, but I fear that in case of severe land retreats the one thought might become uppermost in the English and American troops' minds: "Why should we give up our lives here for a Europe for which there is no more help. Our homeland is protected by the sea and safe from attack, let Europe take care of itself." This could happen, yes, this could surely happen if only a land war were concerned, for nearly all the morale factors are speaking for the Red Army. In consequence, this then ought also to apply to the warriors of the USSR at sea and in the air. But the Navy and Air Force of the USSR are at the present time technically and materially so hopelessly inferior that no one particular morale factor can be put to use.

The War Economy and particularly the Amusement Industry had been, in the last war, developed to an unparalleled extent in the USSR as well as in England and America. Without proof thereof I still would like to state that the economic conversion

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of England and the USA has been carried out further than that of the USSR. That is due to the aims based on the economic and political structure of these states. Nevertheless, I believe that the warnings of the General Staffs have not gone unheard in the Democracies and that the words of General George MARSHALL: "The world does not take the wishes of the weak seriously," have not failed of their import. The material preparedness for war on both sides, especially on the part of the USSR in still greater measure, must be assumed on my part. A lack of priorities (war) raw material exists in none of the mentioned states. The existing equipment and supplies make possible the renewal and continuation of a war anyway for a certain length of time. The same can be said for the weapons, munitions, and carburants. The lot of disarmed Germany has benefitted both sides, even if the Western Powers made certain of the lion's share, which was not without support from the German side.

If it should come to a military conflict between the USSR and the Democracies now, then Russia would be the attacker. She cannot count on the states which are her willing allies, but she can count on the neutrality of those which do not feel themselves threatened or are exposed to the strangle hold of the Red Army. It would be a mistaken assumption though to believe that the USSR cannot, already today, mobilize considerable reserves of manpower in the subjugated countries: the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria. She will not commit the error of building up independent armies in these states which would be of problematical value, but she will manage to mobilize at least 700,000 men from these countries and to assign them to her own complements. Yugoslavia which can be reckoned today as an independent Soviet Republic will be, it goes without saying, an ally. Within Russia there can be set up four (4) German Armies, each of a strength of 300,000 men with their entire Officers' Corps and their entire equipment. Their political re-orientation has been and is being undertaken and

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The results, so far, are not known with certainty. It has not been of long enough duration that such an experiment could be risked. Surely not in a war with Germany but with France when Russian victory is in prospect.

The propaganda line for these German soldiers is clear, logical, and beguiling; i.e., the rebuilding of Germany as an economic unit and its reconstruction under the mandate of the USSR (with the alternative of participation in the war and for a new united, if bolshevized Germany, or never again to return to Germany). Can the effect and the result of such propaganda remain long in doubt?

What decisive military importance the behaviour of Sweden and Turkey bears will be shown by me in my treatment of the War Plan with which I will now occupy myself.

III. THE WAR PLAN

I take the standpoint that the Soviet march will be no different than from Summer 1940 up to 1941 against Germany. This will run from the English/American Demarcation Line up to deep within the territories of Poland, Hungary and Rumania.

The concentration of the Armies at and in the rear of the jumping-off line can be effected in about ten (10) days.

The most important supply lines out of the Soviet Union to the Front traverse Berlin, Breslau and Vienna; this fact stamps these areas as a great Supply Central which form a natural basis for organizing the Soviet Armies into three Army Groups (called "Fronts" by the Russians) namely, a NORTHERN Front, a CENTRAL Front, and a SOUTHERN Front. A fourth Front, namely the MEDITERRANEAN Front will be formed in Slovakia and Croatia.

Despite the enormous distances from their home bases the supply of the Red Army up to the end of the war was surprisingly

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good and rapidly worked out. Today it must be assumed that
bases will have been set up in Central Europe
able to withstand all demands (made upon them),
even in heavy fighting.

As briefly described in Part I, Russian superiority on
land is so great that it is not necessary for them to link up
the masses of their forces at a center of gravity. Despite this
I believe that the strongest Russian forces will be assembled
on the CENTRAL Front and that these will push out from the
Thuringia Forest barrier over the shortest route to break
through to Mainz. Strong forces lined up deep in the rear of
this forward push will follow up in order to threaten the North
and South and force the English and American divisions to re-
treat to the Rhine. The NORTHERN Front will occupy the North
Sea ports and then with their masses push onwards over Muenster
to the Ruhr. The SOUTHERN Front will experience great diffi-
culties with the terrain in Bavaria and Wuerttemberg which will
require over-running vast areas. From there they will form as a
strong rear echelon and strike out towards the CENTRAL Front
and close in on a too tenaciously battling enemy from the North
and annihilate him.

The initial task of the MEDITERRANEAN Front will be two-
fold. Through the occupation of Venice and Lombardy they must
cover the southern flank of the Northern Alps towards the West
of the attacking Soviet forces and thus deny the English and
American forces in Upper Italy the use of a very dangerous base
for their entire operation.

In addition to this push against Germany and Italy the
Soviets will also have to uncover their extended flanks of this
main operation and for this purpose it will be necessary to have
strong forces ready in Finland; a Bulgarian/Soviet Army concen-
trated south of Burgas for an attack against Istanbul and to push
out from Georgia and Armenia. This military step will have the
initial effect of bringing pressure to bear against Sweden and
Turkey and enforce their neutrality.

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It is perhaps superfluous to say that with this action the military possibilities of the USSR to disrupt the Anglo-Saxon Powers would be exhausted. However, I am leaving the Near and Far East out of consideration for in the first phase of such a war these theaters will be of lesser importance as opposed to the main objective; i.e., to bring Western Europe under Soviet domination and to bolshevize these countries. Perhaps exception will be taken to this statement on the ground that this objective exceeds the objective of the Soviet Forces. I, however, don't believe so -- at least as far as land forces are concerned, (the Air Forces and Navies will be touched upon later). Russia can, without any difficulty, place five (5) million soldiers in Western Europe and another million from Yugoslavia and other territories newly occupied. In this connection I am disregarding the 1.5 to 1.6 million German soldiers being held in Russia. Despite the high losses sustained by Russia during the war it will be quite possible for her to have ready another three (3) million troops for other theaters of war.

After this brief presentation on the apparent or at least possible Russian operations in the event of an approaching war against the Anglo-Saxon Powers let us now consider their position. How very desirable it would be for Germany if the situation could be viewed in other than the actual circumstances. But as I also must view the situation there is NO SALVATION for Germany. When STALIN decides to march, then no American or English general should hold fast to a deceptive hope that the Anglo-American Air Forces superiority can be counted on for support in the decisive battling taking place in the middle of Germany. Any such attempt (support) will have been defeated long before the Air Forces could effectively provide aid in the land operations through the annihilation of the English and American Occupation Divisions east of the Rhine. There is only one solution (decision) and that is to get back of the Rhine as rapidly as possible. But even this can only be accomplished if strong Anglo-Saxon

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forces are able to continue putting up resistance against the main Russian drive on Mainz - until the divisions in the North Germany could be gotten to safety, the retreat (banks), and the defense of the Rhine organized. This would require 130 to 150 divisions which would probably have the help of the newly formed French Army and there can be no doubt that Switzerland would be agreeable to being used as a southern cornerstone in this last Eastern Wall of Europe.

It would be desirable for later on that bridgeheads be held on the eastern bank of the Rhine or that the American divisions on hand in southern Bavaria be wheeled into line in a flank position in the Alps which will be an impossibility due to the scarcity of forces needed in the Rhine defense. The protection of the Alpine passes as well as the defense of the Isonzo must be left to the divisions on hand in Italy, whose immediate reinforcement apparently would be unavoidable.

And I now come to the task of the Air Forces which will play a decisive role in this war. As the Red Army today cannot be conquered on land only the Anglo-Saxon Air Forces may perhaps, by dint of great effort and readiness to sacrifice itself against the sources of supply and lines of communications (supply), to destroy same to such an extent that Russia must give up the fight. For this purpose all the long-range bombers that were used against Germany and Japan at the end of the war must be employed. Where then must the operational bases for the Air Forces be located in order to carry out this task? In order to answer this question the tasks of the Air Forces must first be precisely set. In my opinion they are the following:

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- 1) They must delay the advance of the enemy to the Rhine, insure the construction of the Rhine defenses, and prevent a crossing of the Rhine.
- 2) The supply lines of the Red Army (railroad tracks and in the Baltic) must be tied up and the enemy Air Force destroyed.
- 3) They must destroy the sources of military power (armament power supply) in the Soviet Union and thus force Russia to her knees.

The first and second tasks can be carried out from France, Belgium and England. I need not point out that an Air Base east of the Rhine would be worthless. A certain degree of added difficulty in carrying out this task exists in the fact that when Russia starts the war the period will be in the beginning of the winter months or in the late fall. Despite this I believe that these tasks can be solved insofar as the above-named operational bases can be maintained for the bombing fleets. And therewith an initial danger will have been disposed of. The Red Army will then have been brought to a standstill on the Rhine; this, however, will not be decisive in the outcome of the war. On the contrary, Russia could go over to a constant holding war. In order to defeat her the Air Forces of the Democracies must also successfully carry out the third task.

The vital key-points for the entire Soviet war machine are in the oil areas of PLOESTI, BAKU and MAIKOP, with the GROSNY refineries, and about eight (8) to ten (10) large power plants which deliver practically all the energy (power) required by the Russian armament industry. The German Air Force studied this question precisely and had models made of all the plants in question. These models were brought to the area south of Flensburg at the end of April 1945 and, under my orders, stored. I assume that nowadays they are in possession of the British.

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If these objectives are destroyed then the backbone of the Russian Wehrmacht will have been broken. These are, in addition to the armament plants in Leningrad, Moscow and Gorki, objectives for the atom bomb. However, for this task the operational bases of the bombers and escort fighters must be adequately advanced. And in this rests the most difficult political and military problem of this war for the Democracies. For carrying out this task air bases in Turkey and Sweden are needed. Both countries are certainly not friendly to the Soviets. But before they decide to link themselves in the Democratic Front they will demand adequate security that they will not be the first victims of the Bolsheviks. They will not be able to reject these requests if they are clearly given to understand that regardless of everything they would become easy prey for the Russians if the Democracies do not win the war and that victory is only possible with their help.

The security demands will take the form of English and American divisions, adequate anti-aircraft, and fighter aircraft. This means that the greatest efforts of the Air Forces cannot be made effective without the Army also being brought to the highest possible (efficient) state. Whether the Dominions of England will take part in the war again I leave to itself.

The task of the British and American Navies will be the easiest; they will, however, not be in a position to bring into play their uncontested and decisive superiority at sea.

Oversea lines of communication will not be threatened by the weak and outmoded U-boat arm of the Soviets; in order to bottle this up it will only require that Russian Naval Bases in the Barents Sea be destroyed. The Baltic exits are not difficult to block off. Those U-boats and other light naval forces that may be able to get into the Baltic will prove of little value. Opposed to this is the fact that a strong fleet force can dominate the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea, destroy the bases at Poti and Batumi, and prevent the export of oil over the Black Sea to Rumania.

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of limited Army Forces, available landing operations in both the Baltic and Black Sea would be without good prospects.

IV. I am aware of the fact that the British and American General Staffs have other military and political documents at their disposal which are more solid than my mere suppositions. In these documents it is likely that several military details show up in another light, but I believe that the strategical basis (of my suppositions) cannot be considered in a very different light.

I do not have any desire to prophesy - I have only the wish that everything I have written will prove superfluous. May a military and political understanding (agreement) be concluded between the USSR and the Democracies which will permit the German people to eke out over a period of time a miserable necessary existence which was brought on as a consequence of the false political leadership it chose to follow in 1933.

If, however, this agreement is not reached then everything will happen that must happen. I have attempted herein to set down that the military forces of the Democracies are today still strong enough -- or can be made to be -- to be victorious. But this hope will be weakened by doubts that the will of the democratic peoples to make such powerful efforts is no longer at hand and cannot be enforced as in the Soviet Union.

And so it may be that one turns one's back resignedly on this eternal European "apple of discord". When the last ship with American and English troops aboard has departed from the French coast then perhaps the purpose of this second World War will be once more recalled, i.e., to do away with Germany and National Socialism as disturbers of the world peace and to protect Poland.

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