

4. National Security Study Memorandum 9¹

Washington, January 23, 1969.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

Review of the International Situation

The President has directed the preparation of an “inventory” of the international situation as of January 20, 1969. He wishes the review to provide a current assessment of the political, economic and security situation and the major problems relevant to U.S. security interests and U.S. bilateral and multilateral relations. In order to put this review into effect he wishes to consider responses to the attached set of questions along with other material considered relevant. The review should include a discussion, where appropriate, of the data upon which judgments are based, uncertainties regarding the data, and alternative possible interpretations of the data.

The responses should be forwarded to the President by February 20, 1969.²

Henry A. Kissinger

Attachment

THE U.S.S.R.

I. General

1. How do the Soviets see their position in the world vis-à-vis the United States?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-129, NSSMs, NSSM 9. Secret. Also *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 364, NSSMs 1–42. Secret.

² The eight-volume response dated February 19, 1969, which was based on papers generated by multiple agencies and included 150 pages on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in volume I, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-129, NSSM 9. On March 6, Halperin sent Kissinger a memorandum outlining how NSSM 9 should be used. Halperin suggested having the NSC staff review the eight-volume response for the purposes of “NSSMs to the bureaucracy requesting additional policy and information studies” and

2. Is there a general trend toward greater assertiveness in Soviet foreign policy or toward more concentration on internal affairs?

3. What bearing does the military balance have on US/Soviet relations? What factors tend to promote Soviet efforts at cooperation with the US; what factors impel the Soviets toward confrontation with us?

4. Are there special factors operating one way or the other at the moment?

II. Military

A. Strategic Forces

1. What is the inventory of deployed Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces as of January 1969? How are these forces likely to develop over the next 1–3–5–10 years in the absence of a US-Soviet limitation agreement? What technological changes seem likely over this time period? What is the extent and significance of increasing Soviet military presence far from the USSR?

2. How much do we know about current Soviet doctrines, plans, and procedures relating to the structure, basing and deployment, command and control, and use of strategic offensive and defensive forces? Which organizations control what particular offensive and defensive programs and forces? How do we get our information about Soviet strategic forces? What are the “hard” and “soft” areas of our information?

B. General Purpose Forces

1. How has the Czechoslovak crisis affected the pattern of deployment, state of readiness and supply, and numerical levels of Soviet General Purpose Forces? Have manning and equipping levels of ground forces changed? Are these short or long-term effects?

2. What is the Soviet capability to deploy and support ground, naval, and air forces (a) in the Mediterranean, (b) in the Middle East, (c) in Africa and Asia? What trends are likely in the next 1–3–5 years regarding each of these areas?

3. What are present Soviet doctrines, plans, inventory levels, and deployments for non-strategic nuclear weapons? What future trends may be discerned?

III. Political

1. What are the sources of our information and the basis for our assessment of Soviet intentions and objectives? What are the “hard” and “soft” areas of our information?

“a Presidential review of the international scene later this spring.” Kissinger initialed his approval to “HAK will outline at staff meeting.”

2. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, what challenges does the US appear to present? What threats to Soviet interests or to Soviet security?

3. What do we know of Soviet desires for a Summit?

4. What is the status of US-Soviet negotiations on opening consulates? What is the status of negotiations on chancery sites, leased lines, fisheries? What is the status of cultural exchanges with the US?

5. Apart from the possible release of Ivanov,³ what possibilities are available for gestures toward the Soviets?

6. What is the role of “wars of national liberation” in current Soviet political-military doctrine and policy? Has this role been modified since Khrushchev’s famous speech of 1961?⁴

7. By what means does the USSR currently influence and/or control the policies of its East European allies? How are the relationships between Moscow and the several East European governments and communist parties likely to be modified as a result of the Czechoslovak crisis?

8. What is the extent and strength of the relationship between Moscow and the various Communist parties of the non-Communist world? Has the crisis affected relationships with Communist parties in other regions? To what extent is competition with Peking a factor?

9. What are the forces within the USSR tending to promote internal political and economic liberalization? What elements oppose liberation? How strong are these factors? How is their balance likely to be affected (a) by US actions or policies, (b) by other external sources? How is their balance likely to be reflected in Soviet foreign and military policies?

10. How do the Soviets see the future of their relations with principal West European countries? How do they see the future of NATO?

IV. Economic

1. How rapidly is the Soviet economy growing? What trends are likely over the next 1–3–5–10 years? What are the likely effects of these trends on Soviet foreign and military policies?

³ Igor Ivanov, a former employee of Amtorg, a Soviet trading cooperation in the United States, was serving a 20-year sentence for espionage. His appeal was under consideration by the Supreme Court. Before leaving office, President Lyndon Johnson reviewed his clemency appeal and decided it was inadvisable to intervene at that juncture in the judicial process. The Nixon administration was considering permanent deportation in lieu of Ivanov serving out his sentence.

⁴ On January 6, 1961, in a speech at the Moscow Meeting of World Communist Leaders, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev promised support for “wars of national liberation,” defined as those “which began as uprisings of colonial peoples against their oppressors [and] developed into guerrilla wars.”

2. How useful and how effective are existing Western controls on the export of strategic goods (a) to the USSR, (b) to other East European countries? In which areas do our COCOM partners disagree with the US positions and what is the basis of their disagreement? How useful, and how effective, are limitations on the extension of credit?

3. What is the existing pattern of trade between the USSR and (a) the West as a whole, (b) the US? What would be the economic and political effects on enlargement of this existing pattern of trade, or other significant modifications of it? Are there goods which, if traded between the US and USSR, would create a significant threat to US security? Noting Kosygin's remarks to McNamara about truck production, are there any initiatives in the trade field which the US should consider?

V. Foreign Military and Economic Assistance Programs

1. What are the principal objectives of the Soviet Government in providing military/economic aid to the LDCs?

2. What strains and burdens do these programs place upon the Soviet economy?

3. What are Soviet attitudes with regard to the provision of sophisticated weapons (surface-to-surface missiles, supersonic fighters, special radar, etc.) to the LDCs?

4. What degree of influence has the USSR acquired as a result of these programs?

5. What politico-military risks does the USSR incur as a result of its military assistance program? Is the Soviet leadership cognizant of these risks? What will be the pattern of resource allocation over the next 1–3–5 years?

5. Editorial Note

The National Security Council held its second meeting on January 25, 1969, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:20 p.m., and Vietnam was the primary topic. For the Vietnam portion of the meeting, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970, Document 10. Near the end of the meeting, a brief discussion of the Soviet Union's role in encouraging a peace settlement in Vietnam was raised in the context of "linkage":

"The President then asked where our contact with the Soviets is at present. Secretary Rogers said the Soviet Ambassador here in Washington but also the Soviet Ambassador in Paris. The President stated, 'I would like to get some recommendations on getting to the Soviets. In a tactical sense, we need a solution to bridge the gap but we