MEmorandum for tHe President

Since my memorandum of 24 August 1945 on the possibility of early Soviet military aggression there have been additional reports suggesting the imminent of such action. The most notable of these are:

1. That MVD chiefs from Belgrade, Belgrade, France, Italy, and the French, British, and U.K. Home in January, meeting at Brussels on 28 August, were directed to disrupt industrial activity in their respective areas through sabotage, strikes, and disorder, in preparation for "military action in the months to come."

2. That Stalin, on 9 September, issued an order discontinuing Soviet demobilization and directing that personnel in process of demobilization return to their units.

3. That Albanian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian troops have been concentrated on the Greek frontier.

4. That the Soviets intend to mine Iskenderun by force on the night of 18 - 19 September.

Each of these reports may be explained on other grounds than the imminent of aggressive Soviet military operations.

1. The first evidently refers to future, and perhaps hypothetical, Soviet military action. The fact that the strikes and disorders have not yet occurred would indicate that the action referred to is at least not imminent.

2. It has long been anticipated that Soviet demobilization would be discontinued on the completion of its third stage about 1 September. The only disturbing report is the reference to the recall of men in process of demobilization. The report is from an unsure source; it is possible that
the smallest element was introduced in its transmission. In any event, the report in itself is an indication of preparedness rather than of imminent aggression.

3. Albanian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian concentrations on the Greek frontier are accepted, but they are not on such a scale as to indicate imminent overt aggression. There are indications that the Albanian dispositions, in particular, are defensive in character. The Soviets could not press their charges against Greece before the United Nations if these countries made no show of forcing Greek aggression.

4. The report of Soviet intention to seize Istanbul tonight is from an extremely indirect and doubtful source. It is unsupported by any evidence of necessary preparation for such an attack, and its probably another item in the war of nerves on Turkey.

On general grounds it is considered unlikely that the Soviet Union would resort to overt military aggression in the near future. This does not exclude, however, a resort to force by local elements under Soviet control in any precipitous local situation. The Soviet Union might seek a favorable solution in Greece by such means as may seem to it a fair prospect of keeping the conflict localized. It has already warned that Greece is a menace to peace. It is capable of precipitating civil war there. The coming disorder would afford to Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria an opportunity and a pretext for intervention in some degree in "self-defense" without the U.S.S.R. itself becoming militarily involved. The Soviet Union, however, set in the political sphere, and particularly in the Security Council, to prevent effective support of the Greek Government, possibly sitting on a precedent the non-intervention policy followed during the Spanish Civil War. In such circumstances however, the U.S.S.R. would maintain its forces in readiness to cope with any Anglo-American reaction.

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