MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Since my memorandum of 26 August 1948 on the possibility of early Soviet military aggression there have been additional reports suggesting the imminence of such action. The most notable of these are:

1. That ND chiefs from Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, and the French, British, and U.S. zones in Germany, meeting at Brussels on 28 August, were directed to disrupt industrial activity in their respective areas through sabotage, strikes, and disorders, in preparation for "military action in the months to come."

2. That Stalin, on 2 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 seize Istanbul by force on the night of 18-19 September.

Each of these reports may be explained on other grounds than the imminence 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 aspect of the 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 coalition element was introduced in its transmis-
sion. In any event, the report in itself is an
indication of preparedness rather than of imminent
aggression.

3. Albanians, Yugoslavs, and Bulgarians concentra-
tions on the Greek frontier are accepted, but they
are not on such a scale as to indicate imminent
overaggression. 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 fearing Greek
"aggression."

4. The report of Soviet intention to seize
Istambul tonight is from an extremely indirect and
doubtful source. It is unsupported by any evidence
of necessary preparation for such an attack, and
its probable 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 precarious
local situation. The Soviet Union might seek a favorable
solution in Greece by such means at any time that it saw a
fair prospect of keeping the conflict localized. It has al-
ready warned that Greece is a menace to peace. It is capable
of precipitating civil war there. The growing 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 would, however, act in the political sphere, and
particularly in the Security Council, to present effective
support of the Greek Government, possibly citing as a precedent
the non-interference 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 re-
action.

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