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23 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, Intelligence  
Deputy Director, PlansSUBJECT : The Case for the Soviets' Employment of Already-  
Constructed Bases for Long Range Aviation (LRA)  
as ICBM Launching Sites

1. LRA bases are large. Indeed, the great area of many of them has been something of a mystery from the beginning. Is it not possible that some of the space was conceived of in the first place as suitable deployment area for a second weapons system?

2. Additional work on these bases would probably occasion a minimum of comment. The facilities and installations already built in these base areas are very extensive. The work force must have little notion of what purpose most of the construction was designed to serve. There is no reason to believe that the work force would immediately identify new construction as specially designed for missile use. Increased movement of supplies and construction materials to the bases would be unlikely to arouse more than passing interest on the part of people living near the bases. The invention of cover stories to mask the purpose of new construction would be easy. The stories would be plausible.

3. Base logistics are already established. No additional communications would probably be necessary. Supply channels exist, and any increased load passing over them could probably be plausibly accounted for in cover stories.

4. The above reasoning might account for a Soviet decision to use these bases as sites for semihardened and hardened ICBM launching points. If, however, the Soviets decided to use these bases for soft sites, the range of problems would be much easier. Total tonnages of material fetched in would be markedly smaller; surface transport might be largely obviated or at least reduced to the point where it drew no attention. If the missile bottles themselves could be fabricated in sections even these might be flown in and assembled in "hangars." These are probably the simple largest items to be dealt with. Whatever was necessary in the way of excavating, concrete beds, etc., could be carried on under cover of the "hangar." (N.B., the Berlin tunnel).

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5. I have tried this idea out a number of times and have always been crushed by the reminder that the Soviets probably know that we know exactly where these LRA bases are located and would accordingly site their ICBMs in a safer spot. However,

a. It is not certain that the Soviets know that we know the precise location of all their LRA bases.

b. If they did they might be reluctant to use these bases for very costly semihardened or hardened ICBM positions. But they might also reason that these bases were ready, convenient, and relatively inexpensive spots for deployment of those ICBMs which they plan to serve the deterrent and preemptive roles and which accordingly require no hardening.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Old data concerning the LRA bases be revisited with the above hypothesis in mind.

2. New data be acquired on some of these bases, if for no other reason than to give this hypothesis another test.

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"Mr. Sheldon and I have talked over the substance of this memo, indeed some of the ideas are his, but he has not seen this text. His name should be attached to the general ideas expressed herein without committing him to the language or the precise recommendations.

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