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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

**INTELLIGENCE VALUE OF SOVIET NOTES
ON AIR INCIDENTS, 1950-1953**

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RM-1348

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FOREWORD

This Research Memorandum is one of a series of four that report the results of an investigation of Soviet reactions to near and actual overflights in peacetime. Each of the four deals with a particular aspect of the problem.

RM-1346, Soviet Reactions to Border Flights and Overflights in Peacetime (TOP SECRET), examines the purposes behind Soviet military, diplomatic, and propaganda response to alleged and actual violations of its borders in different historical periods and in different strategic contexts.

RM-1347, Diplomatic Aspects of Soviet Air-Defense Policy, 1950-1953 (SECRET), discusses some of the difficulties faced by Western diplomacy in attempting to oppose effectively the severe Soviet air-defense policy of the years 1950-1953. The study examines in detail the ingenious diplomatic formula which the Soviets used to describe and justify their action against planes that threatened to intrude upon their air space.

RM-1348, Intelligence Value of Soviet Notes on Air Incidents, 1950-1953 (CONFIDENTIAL), applies the technique of content analysis to Soviet diplomatic notes in an attempt to infer the Soviet intentions behind each air incident and the degree of concern felt by Soviet policy makers over the possible political consequences of their action in each case.

RM-1349, Case Studies of Actual and Alleged Overflights, 1930-1953 (SECRET) and its Supplement (TOP SECRET), contain the basic data on which the three preceding RM's are based. All known cases of real or alleged overflight of another country's air space during the period 1930-1953 have been studied, including Soviet and Satellite overflights of noncommunist countries. The case studies contain considerably more information about major air incidents than appears in any of the first three Research Memorandums.

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INTRODUCTION

During the period April, 1950, to December, 1953, a number of Western planes that have flown near or across the borders of the Soviet-dominated land mass have been subjected to hostile attack by Russian or Satellite fighter craft. Seven such planes were shot down, and several others were damaged. In addition, there were other, similar incidents during this period, which were not revealed by either side.

It would be useful for Western policy makers to know the Soviet motives that lay behind each of these incidents, and the extent of Soviet concern over their political consequences. Western intelligence agencies have had to rely for such information on inferences made from an analysis of the factual circumstances of a particular incident, and the international setting in which it occurred. But since the reliability of such estimates is increased by independent corroboration, most Soviet experts would prefer to supplement their speculations by materials that bear more directly on the questions of Soviet intention and concern.

The present study illustrates a way by which such corroborating materials can be obtained from an analysis of the content of the Soviet diplomatic communications that accompanied the air incidents under discussion. In its most familiar form, content analysis is used to infer an enemy's intentions from his propaganda, and it has been so used in the past with a fair

degree of success.¹ The method is also often employed to analyze the more specialized communications of an opponent. That is the use made of it in this study, and it is suggested that it can be applied in a similar way to all future air incidents that may become the subject of Soviet diplomatic communications, and thus add a useful auxiliary instrument to the tool kit of the expert in Soviet affairs.

We have examined the diplomatic communications that were issued after the following incidents:

1. The shooting down of a U.S. Navy Privateer plane over the Baltic Sea on April 8, 1950.
2. The shooting down of a U.S. Navy Neptune bomber off Vladivostok on November 6, 1951.
3. The damaging of an Air France passenger plane flying through the Berlin air corridor on April 29, 1952.
4. The shooting down of a Swedish DC-3 over the Baltic Sea on June 13, 1952.
5. The shooting down of a Swedish Catalina search plane over the Baltic Sea on June 16, 1952.
6. The shooting down of a U.S. RB-29 off Hokkaido on October 7, 1952.
7. The firing upon a U.S. unmarked hospital plane in the Berlin corridor on October 8, 1952.
8. The shooting down by Czech fighters of a U.S. jet fighter over Bavaria on March 10, 1953.
9. The shooting down of a British Lincoln bomber over Germany on March 12, 1953.

1. Cf. RAND RM-116, "The Intelligence Value of Content Analysis" (CONFIDENTIAL); and RAND RM-511, "The Intelligence Value of Content Analysis--II" (CONFIDENTIAL).

10. The firing upon a U.S. RB-50 off Kamchatka on March 15, 1953.
11. The shooting down of a U.S. B-50 off Vladivostok on July 29, 1953.

We make the assumption that Soviet diplomatic communications on these air incidents intentionally or inadvertently contain a direct or indirect expression of Soviet policies and calculations. We further assume that the diplomatic notes themselves may have been used to further Soviet aims. We would expect the Soviets to realize that hostile acts against Western planes may entail political risks, and to attempt to minimize such risks by what they say in their diplomatic notes.

If these assumptions are valid, then it may be possible to determine from a study of the Soviet diplomatic notes something about the Soviet intention behind its hostile action against Western planes and about the extent of concern felt by Soviet leaders over the political consequences of these acts.

Analyzing Soviet diplomatic notes from this standpoint, we have inferred that incidents Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 probably resulted from a Soviet policy (standing instructions) calling for hostile attack on aerial intruders, and that incidents Nos. 4, 11, and possibly also 8, resulted from special instructions to shoot down the intruding Western plane.

In addition, we have found that there may have been a real modification of the hostile Soviet policy after Stalin's death in March, 1953, that the Soviets were most concerned over the consequences of incidents Nos. 9 and 10, and that they showed relatively little concern over incidents Nos. 2 and 6.

INDICATORS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS

Whether Soviet action against a Western plane is the result of standing instructions (policy) or special instructions (governing a particular incident) bears directly on the Soviet intention in each case. Incidents resulting from standing instructions to take particular types of action in certain situations can be assumed generally to have no special political or diplomatic objective; the intention behind the incident is the same as the intention behind Soviet air-defense policy itself. On the other hand, incidents that result from special instructions are probably intended to achieve some specific military, political, or diplomatic objective. It is important for Western policy makers to gauge the objective in each case in time to devise an appropriate response.

On four occasions in the past, the U.S.S.R. has disclosed its air-defense policy in diplomatic communications following hostile action against Western planes. The incidents were those of the U.S. Navy Privateer (No. 1, April 8, 1950), the two Swedish military planes (Nos. 4 and 5, June 13, and 16, 1952), the U.S. RB-29 (No. 6, October 7, 1952) and the British Lincoln bomber (No. 9, March 12, 1953).² The key provision of the Soviet policy disclosed on these occasions was that Soviet airmen were to force an intruding plane to land at a Soviet

2. The verbatim texts of Soviet statements are given in the APPENDIX.

airfield. This requirement was formulated rigidly and admitted of no exceptions: every plane suspected of violating Soviet territory had to land at the request or demand of intercepting Soviet aircraft.

It is reasonably clear from this language that the Soviets wanted the West to know that similar hostile action would be taken if there were further encroachments upon Soviet borders in the future. (It is unlikely that they were engaged in bluff or deception. In fact, they repeatedly attempted to shoot down Western planes under similar circumstances at later times.)

The Russians included a statement of their policy in their communications because they wanted us to know that they regarded hostile counteraction of this sort to be a legitimate exercise of sovereignty in protection of their interests.³ In other words, the Soviets were willing to take official responsibility for these actions.

Their policy disclosure on these occasions may be contrasted with their behavior when they know that their actions are clearly indefensible.⁴ At such times they simply ignore or deny charges that Soviet planes have been involved in the protested activities. This difference in behavior supports the belief that official air-defense policy was being communicated on the four occasions referred to above.

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3. Whether the Soviet action in these instances and the air-defense policy behind it actually were defensible from the standpoint of international law is a question that has been considered in RM-1347, "Diplomatic Aspects of Soviet Air-Defense Policy, 1950-1953" (SECRET).
 4. Examples are the Soviet overflights of Hokkaido in late 1952 and early 1953, and Soviet interference with U.S. planes flying the Vienna corridor in 1946. See RM-1349.

We conclude that, when Soviet air-defense instructions are explicitly cited, we are in possession of an open indicator that the hostile attack is the result of official policy, and that it probably carries no implication of a special objective over and above ~~that~~ policy.⁵

Another indicator of intentions is to be found in the Soviet version of the "facts" of an incident. Beginning with the Baltic incident of April 8, 1950 (No. 1), Soviet diplomatic communications have often described the action taken against an intruding plane in stereotyped terms. They have asserted that the Western plane refused a request to land, opened fire, and was in turn fired upon by Soviet fighters. Only minor differences in wording have distinguished repetitions of this stereotype in order to reflect differences in time, place, type of plane, and degree or length of alleged violation.

This stereotype serves as an indicator of intentions because it bears a close resemblance to the explicit statement of Soviet air-defense instructions. Note the parallel in the case of April 8, 1950:

Soviet Version of the Incident

"...a flight of Soviet fighters ...demanded that the American plane follow it to land at the airdrome."

Statement of Air-Defense Policy

"In the event of violation by a foreign plane of the frontiers of the country and its penetration into Soviet territory, Soviet airmen are instructed to force it to land on Soviet territory...."

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5. In any given case, it is necessary to consider the possibility that the Soviets might cite air-defense instructions in order to conceal either accidental, unofficial action, or a specially staged incident. But these possibilities are likely to be remote. Unofficial shooting down of other planes by Soviet pilots is unlikely, and the special objective of a specially staged incident could be jeopardized if the incident were represented as a routine implementation of policy.

The same parallelism is present in the messages relating to the other three occasions on which air-defense instructions were repeated, and it is interesting to note that April 8, 1950, marked (1) the first postwar shooting down of a Western plane, (2) the first explicit statement of Soviet air-defense instructions, and (3) the first use of the stereotyped version of the facts of an incident.

There are at least three ways in which Western intelligence analysts can benefit from close attention to Soviet use of the stereotype. In the first place, since Soviet air-defense instructions are not cited in every case, use of the stereotype can support, with considerable plausibility, an inference that the Soviet action has been in implementation of air-defense policy.⁶

Secondly, since the stereotype usually appears in the first Soviet note following an incident, whereas the air-defense instructions usually appear, if at all, only later in the dispute, analysts can estimate more quickly whether the incident has resulted from application of Soviet policy, and thus enable the United States to initiate in time a diplomatic reaction with clearly defined policy objectives.

Thirdly, the stereotyped version of the facts is particularly useful for inferring Soviet intent in nonfatal air incidents, especially since the Soviets have never cited their air-defense instructions when they failed to shoot down the Western plane.

6. Incident No. 2, November 6, 1951, is a case in point. It is probable that Soviet policy was not explicitly stated at this time only because the diplomatic exchange was short: only one Soviet note was issued.

In such cases it is often difficult for Western observers to judge whether the Soviet intent was fully hostile, or whether the Soviet fighters were merely attempting to warn the intruding plane. However, if the Soviets assert that the intruder "was asked to land, but refused or ignored the request," retention of this key element of the full stereotype warrants the inference that the behavior of the Soviet fighters had a fully hostile intent; otherwise it is unlikely that the Soviets would say they had asked the intruding plane to land. Such incidents, it may be plausibly inferred, were unsuccessful attempts to implement the Soviet policy of taking hostile action against intruding planes.

Using this principle of inference, we have concluded that fully hostile Soviet intent lay behind the Air France case of April 29, 1952, and the U.S. unmarked hospital plane incident of October 8, 1952 (Nos. 3 and 7). In both cases, the Soviet note held that the intruding plane had ignored orders to land, though it omitted the familiar charge that the Western plane had fired first. Since both the Western planes were unarmed and known by the Soviets to have landed safely, the latter charge could have been easily disproved. This omission, therefore, is less significant than the allusion to the landing requirement.

The same reasoning leads to the conclusion that the Soviet intent was not hostile in two nonfatal incidents that occurred on March 12, 1953 (referred to by the Soviets as involving British planes of the York and Viking types); for in neither of

these two cases was any portion of the stereotype retained.⁷ Our findings for the Kamchatka incident of March 15, 1953 (No. 10), on the other hand, are inconclusive. In this case, the Soviet note omitted the important landing requirement of the stereotype, but did allege that the U.S. plane had fired first.

We have noted the possibility that Soviet actions against Western planes may, at times, be intended to achieve specific diplomatic or political objectives. In the light of our finding that Soviet use of their stereotyped version of an incident probably means that the action arose out of policy rather than from special objectives, the possibility that an incident was specially staged must be seriously considered when the Soviets do not use the stereotype to describe it.

Of course, nonuse of the stereotype is only one clue, and a judgment about the motive behind any specific incident must take into account all the available evidence. An example is provided by the case of the Swedish DC-3 on June 13, 1952 (No. 4): nonuse of the stereotype suggests, and independent intelligence clues strengthen, the belief that this incident was staged by the Soviets for special reasons, and was not the result of routine air-defense policy.

In the case of the U.S. F-84 incident of March 10, 1953 (No. 8), the Czech government did allege that the U.S. plane

7. Three incidents occurred on this date: the two cited here and the fatal one listed as No. 9 above. (See RM-1349.) The Soviet notes relating to the two nonfatal ones will be found in the APPENDIX to the present study.

ignored a request to land, but, curiously, it did not reproduce the familiar charge that the intruding plane had fired first.⁸ For this as well as other reasons not considered here, the interpretation that the Czech action was in implementation of policy is not entirely satisfactory.

8. However, in a subsequent incident (March 12, 1954) involving two U.S. Navy planes, the Czech government did charge disregard of instructions to land as well as initiation of the attack. Thus, the Czech version of the facts of the March, 1954, incident resembled the Soviet stereotype more closely than did their version of the March, 1953, incident.

INDICATORS OF SOVIET CONCERN

How concerned the Soviets are over the political consequences of their actions against Western planes can be inferred from the way they describe their action and, particularly, from the extent to which they attempt to justify it. We have seen that Soviet use of their stereotyped version of an incident is a device for giving the Soviet action a broad justification in international law.⁹ To the extent that their diplomatic communications go beyond the stereotype in attempting to justify an incident, they provide us with material for gauging the degree of Soviet concern over the political consequences of their actions. Experts on Soviet political communication would probably agree that there is a tendency for the Soviets to refer to events of a comparable or recurring character in increasingly stereotyped terms. If this generalization were applied to the matter of air incidents, we would expect that, as the Soviet version of the facts was repeated from case to case, it would become compressed to its essentials. That is, the stereotype would contain fewer elaborations and supporting details, unless circumstances aroused concern in the minds of Soviet policy makers which, in turn, led them to add self-justifying details to their account of what happened. The indicator of Soviet concern, in other words, is the degree to which the basic stereotyped version of the facts is elaborated with

9. See particularly RM-1347, "Diplomatic Aspects of Soviet Air-Defense Policy, 1950-1953" (SECRET).

details designed to justify the action in shooting down the air intruder.

Applied to five cases in which the Soviets shot down Western planes, this indicator yields the following conclusions:¹⁰

1. The Soviet account of the Baltic incident of April 8, 1950 (No. 1) contained considerable justificatory detail, thus indicating a good deal of Soviet concern.

2. The second use of the stereotype on November 6, 1951 (incident No. 2) was considerably simpler and reflected less of an attempt to justify the action.

3. On June 16, 1952 (incident No. 5 involving the Swedish Catalina search plane) the Soviet account contained elaborations of a justifying nature: for example, the Swedish plane was said to have "continued" in its violation of Soviet territory, and the Soviet planes, it was claimed, "repeatedly requested" it to land.

4. The note including the fourth use of the stereotype (incident No. 6, October 7, 1952) was unadorned except for emphasis on the "legitimate demand" of Soviet fighters that the U.S. plane land.

5. Finally, the Soviet account of the March 12, 1953, incident of the British Lincoln bomber (No. 9) contained an unprecedented amount of elaborate justification. Not only, it was said, did the British plane "continue" its violation of Soviet-occupied territory, but, even after it had "fired first"

10. Cases Nos. 4 and 8 were probably specially staged incidents and are not discussed in this context.

on Soviet fighters, the latter responded initially by warning fire only, and did not fire with hostile intent until they found that the British plane was continuing its attack on them. Moreover, an unprecedented effort was made in this case to lend credibility to the Soviet claim that the other plane had opened fire, by referring to the discovery of armaments and "used cartridges" in the wreck of the British plane. (The official British version was that the Lincoln bomber did not carry live ammunition and could not have fired as alleged.)

The same indicator, or rule of inference, can be applied to nonfatal air incidents in which the Soviet intent, though presumably hostile, was unsuccessful. In such cases, however, it appears that the degree of justification is proportionate to the degree of damage inflicted upon the alleged intruder.

For example, the note following the Air France case (No. 3), in which both plane and passengers were hit, was more detailed and self-justificatory than that issued after the U.S. hospital plane incident (No. 7), when no damage was inflicted. The obvious inference is that the Soviets were somewhat more concerned over the political consequences of the first incident.

On the other hand, considerable Soviet concern was manifested over the Kamchatka incident (No. 10), though the U.S. plane suffered no damage. The Soviet note was unusually conciliatory and contained much justification. It was alleged that Soviet defense acted only after the second violation of Kamchatka by the U.S. plane. It was implied, further, that the Soviet counteraction

took place (only?) because the U.S. violation was not accidental but "clearly premeditated." This unusual concern can be attributed to fear on the part of Stalin's successors that, occurring as it did only shortly after the tension-inducing incidents of March 12, this incident would further prejudice the effort of the new regime to present itself in a conciliatory, "peaceful" light. This interpretation is supported by the considerations discussed in the next section.

INDICATIONS OF A POLICY CHANGE

Stalin died on March 5, 1953. Shortly thereafter, five air incidents took place within five days, at least three of which were the result of hostile intent on the part of the Soviets. At first glance, these incidents seemed to indicate that the new regime had decided to assume a more hostile posture in international affairs than the Soviet Union had until then occupied, but the diplomatic handling of the incidents gave quite a different impression of their attitude.

The striking contrast between the severity of Soviet action in these incidents and the conciliatory tone and content of the resulting Soviet diplomatic communications can be accounted for as follows: the severe air-defense policy that began in April, 1950, continued in effect for a short while following Stalin's death. The new regime was disagreeably surprised by the rash of air incidents in mid-March, and was concerned over their political consequences. The shooting down of the British Lincoln bomber in particular (case No. 9, March 12, 1953) impressed upon them the necessity for immediate reconsideration of the old air-defense policy, so as to bring it into line with the softer tactical approach toward the West which was about to unfold. In fact, the unusual Soviet expression of regret at the loss of British lives in the Lincoln bomber case and the invitation to engage in discussions aimed at preventing similar air incidents in the future were among the first of a series of conciliatory gestures.

This interpretation is supported by changes in what had become a fairly standard phraseology in Soviet communications about air incidents. For example, after Stalin's death no diplomatic note repeated in full the statement of the severe air-defense policy that had appeared in similar notes three times previously. It is possible that such changes were intended merely to conciliate the Western powers and prevent them from challenging Soviet air-defense policy directly. But they may also have been intended to veil a real modification of that policy. The tension-producing Lincoln bomber incident could have made modification of the policy seem desirable to the new Soviet leaders.

The Soviet note following that incident stated that the British plane had been requested to land, "according to regulations of the Soviet Air Force...." Omitted was the more offensive provision that if, when requested to land, an intruding plane "resisted," Soviet fighters were to fire upon it. The omission, seemingly in response to the strong British reaction to the incident, may have reflected the new Soviet awareness of the desirability of moderating the old policy, or, at least, a certain indecision as to the wisdom of reasserting publicly the severe air policy of the late Stalin era.

Several days after this note, Soviet authorities issued a second note that referred to all three of the March 12 incidents over Germany and, in doing so, introduced an entirely new diplomatic phraseology. In describing the action of Soviet

fighters in the two nonfatal incidents, the note said nothing about a "request to land." Instead, it stated that the two British planes in question had been given "customary warning signals," presumably to get them to rectify their error. Since the landing request had been associated with the earlier hostile air-defense policy, the changed phrasing on this occasion may tentatively be inferred to have meant that a nonhostile policy was being introduced, or at least being considered, and that the term "customary" (though there was nothing customary about the warning) was simply a device for veiling or blurring the change.

A few days later, the Kamchatka incident (No. 10) occurred. In its version of it, the Soviet note again omitted reference to a landing request. Instead, resort to fire against the U.S. RB-50 was justified solely on the grounds that the U.S. plane had fired first.

Finally, in the U.S. B-50 incident of July 29, 1953 (No. 11) the older stereotype was replaced by an entirely new version of the "facts" of the incident, which clearly implied a much less hostile policy toward air intruders. The Soviet fighters were said to have approached the B-50 "with the aim of showing the American aircraft that it was within the bounds of the U.S.S.R., and to propose that it leave the air space of the Soviet Union...." (Underscoring added.) The note went on to say that the American plane had opened fire and was fired upon in retaliation.

The possibility cannot be excluded that this new, conciliatory language was employed simply for purposes of concealing more

effectively a policy that remained hostile, as before. But it does not seem likely that for such a purpose the Soviets would have chosen a statement that so clearly implied the introduction of a different policy, a statement that could be used by the United States as a basis for committing the U.S.S.R. diplomatically to a less hostile policy in the future. It seems more plausible to assume, in the absence of intelligence to the contrary, that a real modification in Soviet policy toward air intruders was introduced after Stalin's death and was in effect at the time of the B-50 incident.

There would be important advantages, from the Soviets' standpoint, to carrying out such a modification without disclosing it formally. Not only would such a veiled retreat spare them a cold-war defeat, but, in the absence of any overt or formal commitment to a more moderate policy, they would be unencumbered, should they wish to reintroduce a severe one later.

It is clear, however, that this, as well as any other single indication of a modification in air-defense policy found in Soviet diplomatic communications, must be cross-checked against other types of information before it is acted upon with any degree of assurance. As stated at the start, the intent of the present study is limited to an attempt to provide intelligence analysts with one more partial tool for their kit.

Addendum

In the recent case of the shooting down of a U.S. Navy Neptune bomber off Vladivostok on September 4, 1954, the Soviet

government gave a version of the facts similar to the one employed in the July 29, 1953, incident discussed above. It appears that a new diplomatic stereotype has been developed since Stalin's death for describing and justifying hostile Soviet action against planes alleged to have violated Soviet air space.

As yet, however, there is no official statement of Soviet air-defense instructions to which one might compare the new Soviet version of the facts. Neither in the case of the September, 1954, nor the July, 1953, incident did Soviet diplomatic notes contain a statement of Soviet air-defense instructions.

But Vishinsky found it necessary to refer to Soviet air-defense policy in the debate of the September, 1954, incident before the U.N. Security Council.¹¹ His statement provides the first opportunity for making the comparison indicated above, but caution is necessary for several reasons. First, Vishinsky's policy statement on this occasion probably was less authoritative -- and perhaps less well informed -- than any similar statement in an official Soviet note, and its authoritativeness is questionable precisely because there was no prior official disclosure.

It is more likely that Vishinsky was obliged, in the debate, to make some reference to policy that would be consonant with the new version of the facts of the latest incident. This, in itself, would have been easy enough. But Vishinsky's task was

11. United Nations Security Council, Verbatim Record of the 679th and 680th Meetings (General S/PV.679 and S/PV.680, 10 September 1954; English).

complicated because he also had to deal with air incidents that took place before Stalin died and to which the Soviet government had applied its earlier stereotype. That is why, probably, Vishinsky's statement of Soviet air-defense policy embraces both the new and the old Soviet diplomatic versions of the facts of air incidents. Thus he said:

I should make it clear that the frontier defense forces of the Soviet Union have orders requiring them, in the event of our frontiers being violated, to call upon the offending aircraft to withdraw or to follow the aircraft defending the frontier to the nearest airfield.¹² (Italics added.)

But the difficulty of the task that Vishinsky had set himself is suggested by the rather clumsy statement he made later in the debate.

...The function of Soviet aircraft protecting the integrity of the frontiers of the Soviet State, is not to shoot down an aircraft, even if it has committed a violation, but to prevent an aircraft from violating the Soviet frontiers and from persisting in such a violation. To that end, they call on the offending aircraft and make a peaceful proposal that it should discontinue the flight. But the cases which Mr. Lodge [Henry Cabot Lodge, U.S. Representative to the United Nations] has compelled me to describe here today go to show that what usually happens is that the aircraft is requested to land but refuses to do so, is called upon to follow the Soviet planes, but declines to do so and opens fire.¹³

The effort to obscure a possible change in Soviet air-defense practice under the new regime led Vishinsky in effect to rewrite the official Soviet version of the facts of two earlier incidents: the Baltic incident of April 8, 1950, and the incident of

12. Ibid., General S/PV.679, p. 22.

13. Ibid., General S/PV.680, p. 40.

November 6, 1951, off Vladivostok. In both cases, he asserted, Soviet fighters called upon the intruding plane to withdraw from Soviet air space whereupon it opened fire, obliging Soviet aircraft to fire back in self-defense. Thus, Vishinsky applied the new post-Stalin stereotype retroactively to incidents which at the time had been officially described according to the earlier, more uncompromising stereotype. Actually Vishinsky gave two versions of the Baltic incident: one based on the account employed by the U.S.S.R. at that time, and the other based on the new, post-Stalin diplomatic version of the facts.¹⁴

14. Ibid., General S/PV.679, pp. 22, 25.

APPENDIX

RELEVANT PARTS OF VERBATIM TEXTS OF SOVIET
DIPLOMATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS¹⁵

I

Fatal Air Incidents Resulting from Successful
Implementation of Hostile Soviet Intent

Incident No. 1, April 8, 1950: The Shooting Down of a U.S. Navy
Privateer Plane Over the Baltic
Sea

Soviet version of the facts:

"...The plane penetrated the territory of the Soviet Union to a distance of 21 kilometers. Owing to the fact that the plane continued to penetrate into Soviet territory, a flight of Soviet fighters took off from a near-by airdrome and demanded that the American plane follow it to land at the airdrome. The American plane not only failed to comply with the demand but opened fire on the Soviet planes. Owing to this, an advanced Soviet fighter was forced to open fire in reply, after which the American plane turned toward the sea and disappeared...." (April 11, 1950.)

Reference to air-defense policy:

"...any aircraft from any country which is obliged to protect the sovereignty of its frontiers...would have acted in precisely the same manner as the Soviet aircraft....As for the instructions to be issued to Soviet airmen mentioned in the American note,¹⁶ the proper instructions have existed for a long time and they need no alteration. These instructions run: In the event of violation by a foreign plane of the frontiers of the country and its penetration into Soviet territory,

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15. Translations of Soviet notes in the N.Y. Times, the Daily Digest issued by the Foreign Broadcast Information Division (CIA), and the files and publications of the State Department have been consulted, and the relevant portions reproduced here have been cross-checked. Only minor discrepancies in translation, of no bearing on the analysis, were noted.
16. The U.S. note of April 18 had demanded that the Soviet government issue "the most strict and categorical instructions" to the Soviet Air Force "that there be no repetition, under whatever pretext, of incidents of this kind...."

Soviet airmen are instructed to force it to land on Soviet territory and, in the event of resistance, to open fire on it." (April 21, 1950.)

Incident No. 2, November 6, 1951: The Shooting Down of a U.S. Navy Neptune Bomber Off Vladivostok

Soviet version of the facts:

"...Upon the approach of two Soviet fighters with the intention of forcing the American plane, which had violated the Soviet state frontier, to land on a Soviet airport, the American plane opened fire on them. The Soviet airplanes were forced to open return fire, after which the American airplane went off in the direction of the sea and disappeared." (November 7, 1951.)

Incidents Nos. 4 and 15, June 13 and 16, 1952: The Shooting Down of a Swedish DC-3 and a Swedish Catalina Search Plane Over the Baltic Sea

Soviet version of the facts of the DC-3 incident:

"...a violation of the Soviet frontier was committed from the Baltic by two foreign aircraft on 13th June, at 13:10 hours, in the region of Ventspils. Owing to mist and unfavorable atmospheric conditions, the nationality of said aircraft was not ascertained. The said aircraft were driven off by Soviet aircraft." (June 24, 1952.)

Soviet version of the facts of the search plane incident:

"...As the Swedish aircraft continued its flight over Soviet territory, a group of Soviet fighter aircraft repeatedly requested the Swedish aircraft to follow it for landing on an airfield. The aircraft which violated the frontier did not submit to this request but opened fire on the leading Soviet aircraft. When the leading Soviet aircraft returned fire, the Swedish military aircraft made off out to sea." (June 17, 1952.)

Reference to air-defense policy:

"The Soviet Foreign Ministry finds it likewise necessary to recall to mind the instructions in force in the Soviet Union as in all other states to the effect that, if a foreign aircraft violates the state frontier and if a foreign aircraft penetrates into the territory of another power, it is the duty of the airmen of the state concerned to force such aircraft to land on a

local airfield and, in case of resistance, to open fire on it." (June 24, 1952.)

Incident No. 6, October 7, 1952: The Shooting Down of a U.S. RB-29 Off Hokkaido

Soviet version of the facts:

"...Two Soviet fighters which had taken off demanded that the American bomber follow them for landing at the nearest airdrome. Instead of fulfilling the legitimate demand of Soviet fighters, the violating airplane opened fire on them. After the return fire of the Soviet fighters, the American bomber went off in the direction of the sea." (October 12, 1952.)

Reference to air-defense policy:

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. considers it necessary to remind that in the U.S.S.R., as in other countries, there are instructions in force according to which, in case of a violation of the state frontier by a foreign airplane, flyers are required to force it to land at a local airport and in case of resistance to open fire on it." (November 24, 1952.)

Incident No. 8, March 10, 1953: The Shooting Down by Czech Fighters of a U.S. Jet Fighter Over Bavaria

Czech version of the facts:

"...The U.S. aircraft were requested to land. This request was not obeyed. In the air battle one of the U.S. aircraft fled in a westerly direction, the second was hit and, steadily losing altitude, disappeared in a southwesterly direction." (March 11, 1953.)

Incident No. 9, March 12, 1953: The Shooting Down of a British Lincoln Bomber Over Germany

Soviet version of the facts:

"...As the aircraft continued to fly further into German Democratic Republic territory, two Soviet fighter planes which were at that time in the air, requested the trespassing aircraft to follow them for the purpose of landing at the nearest airfield....However, the trespassing aircraft not only did not comply with this just request, but opened fire on the Soviet aircraft. Soviet fighters were compelled to reply to this action and fired a warning in reply. The trespassing aircraft continued, however, to fire on the Soviet planes. The Soviet planes were then compelled to fire in reply. The trespassing aircraft then

started landing and fell southwest of Schwerin on the territory of the German Democratic Republic...Two aircraft cannons, a large caliber machine gun, ammunition and used cartridges were found in the wreckage." (Letter sent by General Vassily I. Chuikov, Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission in Germany, to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, British High Commissioner, March 13, 1953.)

Reference to air-defense policy:

[In context of the above letter] Soviet fighter planes requested the British plane to land at the nearest airfield "according to regulations of the Soviet Air Force and also to regulations valid in the air forces of other states."

Incident No. 11, July 29, 1953: The Shooting Down of a U.S. B-50 Off Vladivostok

Soviet version of the facts:

"When two Soviet fighters drew near with the aim of showing the American aircraft that it was within the bounds of the U.S.S.R. and to propose that it leave the air space of the Soviet Union, the American plane opened fire at them and seriously damaged one of the above-mentioned Soviet planes, the fuselage and left wing of which were hit and the airworthiness of the aircraft was disturbed. The Soviet planes were forced to open retaliatory fire, following which the American plane flew away in the direction of the sea."
(July 30, 1953.)

II

Nonfatal Air Incidents: Presumed Hostile
Soviet Intent Unsuccessfully Implemented

Incident No. 3, April 29, 1952: The Damaging of an "Air France" Passenger Plane Flying Through the Berlin Air Corridor

Soviet version of the facts:

The French plane did not reply to signals ordering it to land, but continued to make a deeper penetration over East German territory. Thereupon, "in order to oblige the aircraft to land," one of the Soviet fighters

"fired a warning burst toward the forward part of the aircraft. After that, the aircraft flew into the clouds and disappeared." (Letter by Major General N. M. Trusov, Deputy Chief of Staff, Soviet Occupation Troops in Germany, April 29, 1952; the full text of the letter is not available.)

Incident No. 7, October 8, 1952: The Firing Upon a U.S. Unmarked Hospital Plane in the Berlin Corridor

Soviet version of the facts:

"...The American plane ignored orders of the Soviet aircraft to land and attempted to hide in the clouds." (Letter by Major General N. M. Trusov, Deputy Chief of Staff, Soviet Occupation Troops in Germany, October 9, 1952.)

Incident No. 10, March 15, 1953: The Firing Upon a U.S. RB-50 Off Kamchatka

Soviet version of the facts:

The U.S. plane made two violations of the Soviet frontier. "Good weather, which in both cases enabled the crew of the aircraft to carry out visual reconnaissance on a large scale, excluded the possibility of loss of orientation and confirmed that the above two cases of violation of the state frontier of the U.S.S.R. were of a clearly premeditated character. When the two Soviet fighter aircraft, which had taken off, approached the American bomber aircraft, which was in process of a second violation of the Soviet state frontier, the American aircraft opened fire against the Soviet fighter aircraft. For the purpose of self-defense, one of the Soviet aircraft had to open fire, after which the infringing aircraft turned around, left the Soviet coast, and disappeared in an eastern direction." (March 21, 1953.)

III

Nonfatal Air Incidents: Soviet Intent
Presumed Nonhostile

Several air incidents, of a nonfatal character, have been disclosed and are of some interest. Insofar as we can judge, in none of these cases was the Soviet intent fully hostile; i.e., when the intercepting Soviet fighters did fire upon the allegedly intruding plane, it was apparently for warning purposes only. We would expect, therefore, that the Soviet version of the facts in these cases would differ appreciably from the stereotype used to describe a fully hostile air-defense action. The Soviet version of the facts in two of these cases, both of which occurred on March 12, 1953, over Germany, was as follows:¹⁷

"...A British plane of the York type left the southern Berlin air corridor....After this aircraft, which violated the boundaries, had been warned by generally customary signals from Soviet patrol aircraft, it returned to the corridor which has been laid down."

"...Another British aircraft of the Viking type likewise left the boundaries of the southern air corridor....After Soviet patrol aircraft had given the customary warning signals, this British aircraft returned to the Dessau area to the air corridor which has been laid down."
(Letter sent by General V. I. Chuikov, Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission in Germany, to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, British High Commissioner, March 19, 1953.)

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17. Three other cases of nonhostile intent are not discussed further in this study. Following the incidents of October 15, 1945, and February 20, 1946, in which the Soviets fired upon U.S. Navy planes in the Port Arthur-Dairen area, we know of a diplomatic statement relating only to the first case. This statement, as paraphrased later in a U.S. Navy announcement, did not allege that the U.S. Navy plane in question had fired first. In the June 4, 1952, "buzzing" of a U.S. plane in the Vienna corridor, the Soviet planes did not resort to fire.