

June 19, 1953

National Security Council Report, NSC 158, 'United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States'

Citation:

"National Security Council Report, NSC 158, 'United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States'", June 19, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, White House Offices, OSA/NSA, Records 1952-1961, Special Assistant Series. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/116203>

Summary:

Recommendations adopted by the National Security Council at the suggestion of the Psychological Strategy Board on covert actions to be undertaken in the Soviet Satellite States. Authorized by the National Security Council, NSC 158 envisaged aggressive psychological warfare to exploit and heighten the unrest behind the Iron Curtain. The policy was endorsed by President Eisenhower on June 26, 1953.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

**DOCUMENT No. 74: NSC 158, "United States Objectives
and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States," 29 June 1953**

Authorized by the National Security Council to explore a possible U.S. response to the unrest in Eastern Europe, the PSB developed an action plan, PSB D-45. The Board adopted a summary of PSB D-45 on 24 June. The plan envisaged aggressive psychological warfare to exploit and heighten the unrest behind the Iron Curtain, including proposals to create resistance cells, increase defections, launch black radio intruder operations and even "encourage the 'elimination' of key puppet officials." (These portions of the document have only recently been declassified.) The NSC approved the plan on 25 June with amendments (see previous document). The next day, Eisenhower endorsed the policy directive.

A Report
to the
National Security Council
by
the Acting Executive Secretary
on
United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the
Unrest in the Satellite States
June 19, 1953
Washington

Note by the Acting Executive Secretary
to the
National Security Council
on
United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the
Unrest in the Satellite States

References: A. NSC Action Nos. 817 and 826; B. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, subject, "United States Policies and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States," dated June 24, 1953; C. NSC 143/2⁹⁵

The National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director, Bureau of the Budget, at the 151st Council meeting on June 25, 1953, approved the recommendations of the Psychological Strategy Board contained in the enclosure to the reference-memorandum of June 24 subject to: (a) more emphasis being placed on passive resistance in implementing paragraph 2-(a), and (b) revision of paragraph 3-(b) to read: "Consider advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria and the satellites" (NSC Action No. 826).

The President on June 26, 1953, approved the recommendations of the Psychological Strategy Board, as amended and approved by the Council, and directs their implementation

⁹⁵NSC 143/2, "A Volunteer Freedom Corps," 20 May 1953. See Department of State, ed., *FRUS 1952-54*, VII, pp. 218-220. See also the introduction to this part.

by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government under the coordination of the Psychological Strategy Board. The President directs, as recommended by the Council, that more emphasis be placed upon passive resistance in implementing paragraph 2-a. The report of the Psychological Strategy Board, as amended by the Council and approved by the President, is enclosed herewith.

Special security precautions are requested in the handling of the enclosure.

S. Everett Gleason
Acting Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

[Page Break]

Report
by
the National Security Council
on
Interim United States Objectives and Actions
To Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States

1. Psychological Objectives

- a. To nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion in areas under Soviet military control, and without compromising its spontaneous nature.
- b. To undermine satellite puppet authority.
- c. To exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.
- d. To convince the free world, particularly Western Europe, that love of liberty and hatred of alien oppression are stronger behind the Iron Curtain than it has been dared to believe and that resistance to totalitarianism is less hopeless than has been imagined.

2. Courses of Action—Phase I (requiring less than 60 days to initiate)

- a. In East Germany and other satellite areas, where feasible, covertly stimulate acts and attitudes of resistance short of mass rebellion aimed at putting pressure on Communist authority for specific reforms, discrediting such authority and provoking open Soviet intervention.
- b. Establish, where feasible, secure resistance nuclei capable of further large-scale expansion.
- c. Intensify defection programs, aimed at satellite police leaders and military personnel (especially pilots) and Soviet military personnel.
- d. Stimulate free world governmental, religious, and trade union activities capable of psychological effect behind the Iron Curtain, such as:
 - (1) International campaign to honor martyrs of the East German revolt.
 - (2) Free trade union denunciation of Soviet repression and demand for investigation of basic economic and labor conditions.

- e. Reemphasize U.S. support for German unity based on free elections followed by a Peace Treaty.
- f. Implement NSC 143/2 (Volunteer Freedom Corps) completing discussions as soon as possible with Allied governments.
- g. Consider bringing Soviet repression of East German revolt before the UN.
- h. Launch black radio intruder operations to encourage defection.
- i. Encourage elimination of key puppet officials.

3. *Courses of Action*—Phase II (requiring lengthy preparation contingent upon developments)

- a. Organize, train and equip underground organizations capable of launching large-scale raids or sustained warfare when directed.
- b. Consider U.S. advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria and the satellites.
- c. Consider new forms of covert organizations based on concepts of:
 - (1) Simulating Soviet officer conspiracy to establish honorable peace with the West.
 - (2) Cooperation between satellite resistance elements and nationalists in non-Russian, Soviet Republics.
 - (3) Cultural appeals to Soviet intellectuals.
- d. Consider inclusion of USSR nationals in Phase II of Volunteer Freedom Corps project.
- e. Consider large-scale systematic balloon propaganda operations to the satellites.

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, White House Offices, OSA/NSA, Records 1952–1961, Special Assistant Series. Obtained by the editor.

A REPORT
TO THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
by
THE ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
on
UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS TO EXPLOIT THE
UNREST IN THE SATELLITE STATES
June 29, 1953
WASHINGTON

NOTE BY THE ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
to the
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
on
UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS TO EXPLOIT
THE UNREST IN THE SATELLITE STATES

References: A. NSC Action Nos. 817 and 826

B. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, subject, "United States Policies and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States", dated June 24, 1953.

C. NSC 143/2

The National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director, Bureau of the Budget, at the 151st Council meeting on June 25, 1953, approved the recommendations of the Psychological Strategy Board contained in the enclosure to the reference memorandum of June 24 subject to: (a) more emphasis being placed on passive resistance in implementing paragraph 2-(a), and (b) revision of paragraph 3-(b) to read: "Consider advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria and the satellites" (NSC Action No. 826).

The President on June 26, 1953, approved the recommendations of the Psychological Strategy Board, as amended and approved by the Council, and directs their implementation by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government under the coordination of the Psychological Strategy Board. The President directs, as recommended by the Council, that more emphasis be placed upon passive resistance in implementing paragraph 2-a. The report of the Psychological Strategy Board, as amended by the Council and approved by the President, is enclosed herewith.

Special security precautions are requested in the handling of the enclosure.

S. EVERETT GLEASON
Acting Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

[Page Break]

REPORT

by

THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

INTERIM UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS
TO EXPLOIT THE UNREST IN THE SATELITE STATES

1. Psychological Objectives

- a. To nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion in areas under Soviet military control, and without compromising its spontaneous nature.
- b. To undermine satellite puppet authority.
- c. To exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.
- d. To convince the free world, particularly Western Europe, that love of liberty and hatred of alien oppression are stronger behind the Iron Curtain than it has been dared to believe and that resistance to totalitarianism is less hopeless than has been imagined.

2. Courses of Action - Phase I (Requiring less than 60 days to initiate)

- a. In East Germany and other satellite areas, where feasible, covertly stimulate acts and attitudes of resistance short of mass rebellion aimed at putting pressure on Communist authority for specific reforms, discrediting such authority and provoking open Soviet intervention.
- b. Establish, where feasible, secure resistance nuclei capable of further large-scale expansion.
- c. Intensify defection programs, aimed at satellite police leaders and military personnel (especially pilots) and Soviet military personnel.
- d. Stimulate free world governmental, religious, and trade union activities capable of psychological effect behind the Iron Curtain, such as:
 - (1) International campaign to honor martyrs of the East German revolt.
 - (2) Free trade union denunciation of Soviet repression and demand for investigation of basic economic and labor conditions.
- e. Reemphasize U.S. support for German unity based on free elections followed by a Peace Treaty.
- f. Implement NSC 143/2 (Volunteer Freedom Corps) completing discussions as soon as possible with Allied governments.
- g. Consider bringing Soviet repression of East German revolt before the UN.
- h. Launch black radio intruder operations to encourage defection.
- i. Encourage elimination of key puppet officials.

3. Courses of Action - Phase II (Requiring lengthy preparation contingent upon developments)

- a. Organize, train and equip underground organizations capable of launching large-scale raids or sustained warfare when directed.
- b. Consider U.S. advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria and the satellites.
- c. Consider new forms of covert organizations based on concepts of:

- (1) Simulating Soviet officer conspiracy to establish honorable peace with the West.
 - (2) Cooperation between satellite resistance elements and nationalists in non-Russian, Soviet Republics.
 - (3) Cultural appeals to Soviet intellectuals.
- d. Consider inclusion of USSR nationals in Phase II of Volunteer Freedom Corps project.
 - e. Consider large-scale systematic balloon propaganda operations to the satellites.