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Project # 3500

INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

PROJECT NO. 3506

DATE 13 January 1947

✓ POSSIBILITIES OF TRANS-ARCTIC ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES ()

COPY NUMBER 6

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By authority of the A. C. of S., G-2

By H. P. Persons, Jr.

AUG 25 1958

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ORIGINATOR G-2, 5th Army		SUBMITTED BY (BRANCH) Scientific		
PREPARED BY (NAME, RANK OR GRADE, BRANCH)				HOURS
Mr. J. E. Jackson, P-7, Scientific				5
Col. Towner, Strategic				1
Miss Katherine Jamison, Strategic (typing)				40
Col. Cook, Topographic				1
Col. Whitney, Western European				1
TOTAL MAN HOURS				48
CHECKED BY				
INTELLIGENCE CONTROL Maj C.D. Fisher	BRANCH CHIEF Scientific W. European Topographic	STRATEGIC SECTION Mr. Alexander	PAGES 68	COPIES 30

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Project No. 3506

13 January 1947

POSSIBILITIES OF TRANS-ARCTIC ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES

Statement of Project

This paper presents all available data on the possibilities in the next few years for an attack on the United States from or through the Arctic regions, including the weapons and means of warfare available to a potential enemy, the bases from which such an attack could be launched, and the various routes of approach.

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~~TOP SECRET~~POSSIBILITIES OF TRANS-ARCTIC ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES1. Weapons and Means of Warfarea. Guided Missiles

The U. S. S. R. has practically all the information the Germans possessed on guided missiles as well as many of their scientists, technicians, and production facilities. It is known that the Soviets are continuing the German work, with the help of these facilities, on V-1 and V-2 types of missiles, and it is likely that they are also working on glide bombs of the Hs-293 type for use against ships and on some sort of antiaircraft missile of the Wasserfall type. It is believed that a modified form of the V-1, launched from the vicinity of Stolp (Polish-administered Germany) or from Estonia and the Baltic islands of Dagö or Oesel, was responsible for the recent reports of "ghost rockets" over the Scandinavian countries. These reports, however, have been greatly exaggerated and augmented by a large number of natural phenomena such as meteors. In any case, it is probable that the V-1 type of missile with a range of 500 to 600 miles, but with rather poor accuracy (three or four percent of the range), could be developed and used by the U. S. S. R. within a year or two. Such missiles could be launched from naval vessels.

Progress on a long-range rocket of the V-2 type is much less probable. No reasonably authentic reports of actual test firings of even the standard German V-2 have yet been received, but it is known that a test and development program is being set up at Peenemünde. It is not likely that any such missile can be developed in the next ten years, with a range greater than 500 miles, that will have a satisfactory accuracy and a sufficiently large warhead to be useful for other than psychological effects. It could not be a real threat to the continental United States. The German V-2, with a maximum range of about 200 miles and an accuracy of about three percent of the range could, and probably will, be produced by the U. S. S. R. within the next two years. The use of such missiles against England would be quite logical, but the rest of Europe could be attacked to better advantage by more conventional bombing methods.

b. Pilotless Aircraft

The use of long-range "drone"-type aircraft by the U. S. S. R. within a few years is certainly a possibility, but due to the lack of precision instrument facilities, the extreme difficulty of developing any satisfactory long-range control or navigation system, and the fact that a human pilot would be so much better and easier to use, it is not believed that such drones would be used by the Soviets. It is believed that most of their real scientific effort in the next five to

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ten years will be devoted to work on atomic bombs, to minor improvements in the effective types of German guided missiles, and to the development and production of defensive radar and fire-control equipment.

c. Arctic Warfare

There is no information available regarding specific Soviet experiments in Arctic warfare or in Arctic tactical or logistic techniques applicable to warfare other than their well-known skill in constructing and using large ice breakers.

d. Atomic Weapons

If the Soviets continue to devote the effort that they now appear to be placing on atomic research, they could have a few bombs by 1950 to 1953, but they could not have more than 100 by 1956. It is unlikely that any guided missile capable of carrying atomic warheads could be developed in this period.

e. Biological Warfare

The U. S. S. R. is believed to have been conducting research in BW since the middle 1930's and may well be capable of effectively utilizing this mode of warfare at the present time. A period of five years would suffice to permit the U. S. S. R. to wage open, large-scale warfare. However, this is contingent on the Soviets' abilities to produce the large number of long-range aircraft which would be necessary to attack as large an area as the United States.

2. Bases

There is no information to show that any bases are held by potential enemies in the Arctic regions in Iceland or in the southern part of Greenland.

3. Routes of Approach

There are two Intelligence Division studies attached which give terrain data on Northern Canada, Northern Siberia, and the northeastern approaches to North America. These studies, though not of recent date, have not been revised as they are consistent with the latest information on the subject. The studies in addition contain discussions of routes of advance by land, sea, and air and of possible bases and launching sites in the above areas. The studies are:

- Appendix A - "Geographic and Economic Study of the Western Hemisphere North of 50° North Latitude", dated 4 Oct 45.
- Appendix B - "Topographic Study of the Northeastern Approaches to North America", dated 11 Oct 46.

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4 October 1945

APPENDIX A

TITLE: Geographic and Economic Study of the Western Hemisphere
North of 50° North Latitude.

I. Statement of Project.

1. This project presents a geographic and economic strategic study of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska (excluding the Aleutian Islands). It analyzes these areas as avenues of attack on the United States proper by describing present and possible means of transportation by land, sea, air and ice pack into and through the area. Possible avenues of approach to the United States by hostile forces from outside the Western Hemisphere are considered. This part of the problem involved a study of land, sea, and air transportation in Siberia, north of the 50th parallel, and east of the Ural Mountains. Staging areas for airborne forces, bases for long-range weapons, and (in Canada and Greenland) areas containing critical minerals are considered.

II. Conclusions.

1. Tentative conclusions are that large areas are suitable for lodgement and for basing long-range weapons and airborne forces in subject areas. Problems of logistics are formidable, and the size of the forces which can be brought to bear are entirely dependent on the solution of such logistical problems.
2. A waterborne attack within the area of this study is extremely difficult and involves many uncertainties in the necessary buildups, initial assault and in supply. Small forces could probably be moved via the Northern Siberia Sea Route, or even over the Arctic ice floes, but chiefly in limited support of forces utilizing other routes of approach. Larger forces could approach Alaska or the North American Pacific coast directly across the North Pacific, the Bering Sea or Bering Strait. Summer is the only time that the Northern Sea Route is open, and at that period soil conditions are such that overland movement and heavy construction are extremely difficult.

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3. Large-scale air attack, including the landing of troops is, perhaps, the most feasible method of attack from northern Siberia. Weather conditions for flying are best in winter when the ground is most suitable for further movement, but all operations in winter may be handicapped by long hours of darkness and extremely low temperatures. Air facilities are available in both North America and Asia for take-off and landing. Transport planes which can negotiate the distances involved probably will be available within a few years. No estimate can be made at this time of the size of forces which could be ferried by air directly across the Arctic or North Atlantic via Greenland.

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