

It was only when these three essentials seemed to be threatened, i.e. that Hungary might break completely with the Soviet bloc, that the Soviet Union resorted to full-scale force to impose its will.

13. The mistake of the rebels, and of Nagy for trying to keep pace with their demands, was in trying to go too far and too fast. The pattern of the whole operation suggests that, while prepared to use force, the Russians would have preferred to have avoided military action as they did in Poland. The ambivalent approach to Nagy and the Hungarian revolt in the course of the critical week may well be a further reflection of differences of opinion within the Soviet leadership as to how best to handle their problems of imperial control. Mr. Johnson has reported some evidence in Moscow that the army leaders seemed depressed by the Soviet policies in Poland and Hungary, and elated when the attack on the Hungarian rebels was decided on. If strategic arguments were paramount in reaching this decision, then it seems logical to expect an increase in the influence of the military. As of this date, Johnson reports no real sign of a decrease in the influence or importance of Khrushchev. The Soviet Union probably decided reluctantly upon its drastic action, only when the potential defection of Hungary threatened to divide the Soviet Empire into a northern and southern tier. The Soviet leaders must have anticipated the extremely adverse reaction of world public opinion, but this was less important than the possible loss of Hungary and the fear that, if they did not take a firm stand in Hungary, the revolt might spread to other satellites.

14. The chronology of events and the assessment of the probable Soviet reasons for full-scale armed intervention cast some light on the relationship between the Soviet action in Hungary and the Anglo-French action in Egypt. The Anglo-French action and the United Nations discussion of it undoubtedly created a sensational diversion of international public attention and probably helped relieve the anxieties the Russians must have had about reaction abroad. But the fact that troop movements began three or four days before the Israeli attack on Egypt and the fact that three additional divisions were ready to move in immediately Nagy denounced the Warsaw Pact suggests that the Anglo-French action was not the dominant factor in determining the ultimate course of Soviet action, which was determined primarily by military necessity. The scale and timing of their action and the logistic preparations obviously required for mounting such an operation suggest that the decision to deal with Nagy by force if necessary was not directly related to Anglo-French action in Egypt.

15. It is conceivable, however, that the Russians might have been deterred from taking this drastic action if the attention of the world had been fully concentrated on Hungary, and if the Western powers had been firmly united, but the facts tend to disprove this. Nevertheless, had the West not been pre-occupied with the Middle East, we might then have been able to take diplomatic initiative to guarantee Soviet security interests in Eastern Europe, or possibly to take advantage of the declared Soviet willingness to discuss the withdrawal of troops from Hungary, Roumania and Poland.

16. In addition the readiness of the British and French to use force in Egypt might have re-inforced the military argument that the USSR could not at that moment afford to risk that Hungary would not only be separated from the Soviet bloc, but might also be used as a spring-board for western incursions against the USSR.

17. But the Soviet dilemma has by no means been solved by their intervention by force to suppress a revolution which they themselves must recognize represented the vast majority of the Hungarian population. In the first place they have to all intents and purposes lost one of the satellite armies. The Kadar government, in spite of its announced programme, will be loathed by most Hungarians and will be able to stay in power only with the support of