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27 April 1955

~~SECOND DRAFT~~

WED. AM AGREEMENT BY

MAY DAY FLY-BY

DI/USAF WORKING-LEVEL

- I. Last year's May Day parade in Moscow featured a single Type 37--the USSR's big new four-engine jet heavy bomber.
 - A. During parade rehearsals for this year's show--next Sunday--our observers have seen as many as ten Type 37's at a time, flying in formation.
 - B. These sightings mean that the Soviet heavy bomber program is substantially more advanced than we had estimated.
 - C. Our old estimates held that the USSR would not start series production of these jet heavy bombers until the third quarter of 1955.
 - D. On this basis, we calculated that the jet heavies would not appear in operational units of the Soviet Air Force until the end of 1956, and that only 50 heavies would be in service by mid-1957.

- II. The Air Force is presently revising these former estimates.
 - A. The Air Force believes that a simultaneous sighting of ten jet heavies means that at least seventeen must now be in existence.
 - B. From this, a preliminary Air Force calculation indicates that the Type 37 actually went into production in Aug '54 and that 55 of the jet heavies will be built by the end of 1955.

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DOCUMENT NO. 26
 NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
 CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S [Ⓢ]
 NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1990
 DATE: 12/2/80 REVIEWER: 006614

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REVIEWER: 006614

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- C. The Air Force further calculates that peak production--
13 planes a month--should be reached by the end of
'57, and that 247 of the jet heavies should be built
by the end of '57.
- D. Range of the Type 37 (Map), in round-trip flight from
Soviet Siberian bases (without benefit of "in-flight"
refueling) covers the continental US in an arc from
Santa Barbara to Duluth.

III. Rehearsals for Sunday's air parade have also shown
Western observer an entirely new large Soviet plane.

- A. This is a four-engine (turbo-prop) swept-wing plane,
of heavy bomber size and configuration:
 - 1. The intelligence community is at a loss to ex-
plain Soviet construction of a turbo-prop heavy
"bomber."
 - 2. The jet-powered Type 37 is already in production
and a large high-performance cargo plane (suitable
for modification as an aerial tanker), rather
than a second class of heavy bombers, would
seem a more urgent Soviet military need.
 - 3. As can be seen (Map), possession of an aerial
tanker would substantially improve the range
and flexibility of the Soviet long range Air Force.
 - 4. A further twist to this puzzle is the fact that the
Soviets have not exhibited a new four-engined cargo
plane of any kind for the past 8 years (when the
IL-18 and TU-70 were flown on May Day '47).

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