

DOCUMENT NO. 4

**National Security Council Report NSC 5608/1,
“U.S. Policy toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe,”
July 18, 1956**

The following updated statement of U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe, the first since NSC 174 (see Document No. 3), was approved by President Eisenhower on July 18 after review by the National Security Council (see Document Nos. 12 and 13). The generally optimistic conclusion of NSC 5608/1 was that the “fluid situation” following the denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth CPSU Party Congress and Soviet acquiescence to Titoism had “increased the previously limited U.S. capabilities to influence a basic change in Soviet domination of the satellites.” The document proceeds to lay out a variety of possible approaches toward that goal. NSC 5608/1 remained in force until the adoption of NSC 5811 in May 1958 (see Document No. 171). The document below was heavily excised when first published in the State Department’s Foreign Relations of the United States series (only the first nine numbered paragraphs were released), but it appears here in full, having only recently been declassified.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

on

U. S. POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET
SATELLITES IN EASTERN EUROPE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

[...]

[Appendix to NSC 5608/1, July 18, 1956]

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF POLICY

by the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

U. S. POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET SATELLITES
IN EASTERN EUROPE

1. Avoid incitements to violence or to action when the probable reprisals or other results would yield a net loss in terms of U.S. objectives. In general, however, do not discourage, by public utterances or otherwise, spontaneous manifestations of discontent and opposition to the Communist regime, despite risks to individuals, when their net results will exert pressures for release from Soviet domination. Operations which might involve or lead to local violence will be authorized only by the Secretary of State with the approval of the President on the basis of feasibility, minimum risk, and maximum contribution to the basic U.S. objectives in NSC 5608/1.

2. As a means of encouraging the eventual establishment of freely elected governments in the satellites as a disruptive device and not as an end in itself, be prepared on a case-by-case basis generally, covertly and under appropriate policy guidance to assist nationalists in any form where conducive to independence from Soviet domination and where U.S. and free world cohesion would not be jeopardized thereby.

[Source: NARA, Record Group 59, Lot 63D351, Box 88.]