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Soviet Foreign Policy in the light of  
President Kennedy's Death

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The Soviet leaders have given every appearance of being genuinely shocked by the murder of President Kennedy and sincere in their messages and acts of official condolence. The assassination and its aftermath have been given extensive and largely factual coverage by the Soviet Press, radio and television. Soviet television made use of Telstar for the first time to transmit pictures directly from Washington. There has, however, been evidence of some embarrassment at the alleged Communist and Cuban connexions of Oswald. The first announcement attributed the deed to "ultra right-wing organisations", and this is still the general line, but some reports have been couched in a more defensive tone, denying that Oswald had ever been a member of the American Communist Party or connected with a pro-Cuban movement.

2. Assessments of the effect of President Kennedy's death on Soviet attitudes can at this stage be only tentative. But the immediate Soviet reaction to President Johnson's assumption of office does not suggest that any sudden change in Soviet policy is planned. Mr. Khrushchev's message of November 23 to President Johnson expressed the hope that efforts to solve disputed questions would be continued. The press has published reports from Washington which suggest, though guardedly, that the opinion there is that for the time being the new President will hold to the course of his predecessor. The Soviet leaders will probably wait for the new President's inaugural statement of policy before committing themselves further; and they will also wish to see whether anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban feeling in the United States is intensified as a result of Oswald's Communist allegiances.

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