

ABSTRACT

MEASURING STALIN'S STRENGTH DURING TOTAL WAR. U.S. and British intelligence on the economic and military potential of the Soviet Union during the Second World War, 1939-45. (Publications of the Department of Economic History, School of Economics and Commercial Law, Göteborg University, no. 91)

ISSN 1403-2864. IBSN 91-85196-59-2. Göteborg 2004.

Author: Martin Kahn

Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Economic History, School of Economics and Commercial Law, Göteborg University

Distribution: The Department of Economic History, Göteborg University, Box 720, SE-405 30 Göteborg, SWEDEN

The ability to assess enemies in times of war has always been important for most countries. During the Second World War the United States and Great Britain not only tried to estimate the strength of their Axis enemies, but also the military-economic potential of the Soviet Union. The intelligence assessments of the USSR were carried out by several US and British Government institutions, including the Military, the OSS, the State Department and the Foreign Office. This study focuses on their estimates of all the factors that can be said to comprise the war potential of the USSR, and the estimates' correlation with reality. This not only includes military capabilities but also and primarily the economic and industrial capacity, as well as the internal stability of the country.

During 1939-41, before the German invasion of the USSR, most observers regarded the Soviet economy and the Soviet armed forces as being weak, inefficient and beset with problems. The British, and the Americans, underestimated almost every aspect of Soviet war potential during these years. The whole Soviet economic structure and the internal stability of the country were not regarded as being able to cope with a large-scale war, and nearly all Anglo-American observers believed in June 1941 that Germany would defeat the USSR. But the Soviet Union survived and assessments of Soviet strength changed to a considerable extent during 1942-45. By 1945 the USSR was regarded as much stronger than in 1941, both economically and militarily.

The US and British assessments of Soviet strength also had a number of implications for their policy during 1939-45, in connection with their war efforts and their relations with the USSR.

KEYWORDS: Soviet Union, USSR, Stalin, Second World War, World War II, Eastern Front, Intelligence, Military Intelligence, Economic assessments, Military assessments, War potential, War, Military-economic, Munitions, Soviet-German war, OSS, Foreign Office, State Department, Intelligence assessments, Military-industrial

© 2004 Martin Kahn
ISBN 91-85196-59-2
ISSN 1403-2864

Printed in Sweden
Kompandiet
Göteborg 2004