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2 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Sherman Kent

SUBJECT : Colonel Fitzgerald and the ABM Question

1. The question of Col. Fitzgerald's use in Moscow has arisen specifically in relation to the talks he has had with high-ranking Soviet officials with regard to the Soviet deployment of ABMs and the nature of that deployment. Some people, including DDP and State, feel that Fitzgerald is being used to feed to the US bogus information and that his usefulness is therefore limited. The military generally feel that he is the best source we have had in Moscow in a long time. This memo will address first our view of Col. Fitzgerald's general capability and usefulness, and then the specific problem of his reporting on the ABM question.

2. Col. Fitzgerald's interest, capability, and background have made him extremely effective in the Moscow post. He has a fluent conversational Russian ability; he has gotten to know the Russians at previous tours in Moscow and at the control commission in Berlin; he looks and thinks like a Russian; he has been extremely imaginative and aggressive in fulfilling intelligence requirements and in following up leads on his own. He has produced more and higher quality information than any other attache posted to Moscow. In particular, he has been able to develop information on Soviet thinking and policy to a degree far beyond the ability of his predecessors. His reporting on general strategy and on questions of general purpose forces policy have been extremely useful, and generally unchallenged. It is his reporting on specific strategic developments, such as ABM, that has been called suspect.

3. The interview that Col. Fitzgerald had with Gen. Maj. Cheryshev, Executive Officer for Marshal Zakharov, Soviet Chief of Staff in January, 1967, was the most provocative of the ABM interviews. Chernyshev opined that there could be no US-USSR ABM agreement because deployment of the Soviet ABM system has been in progress for 2-3 years and is

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well advanced. He also implied Col. Fitzgerald could have seen ABMs in the Leningrad area, but he changed the subject when questioned if the remainder of the country was covered. He also implied the Soviets did not tell the truth when they called Griffon an ABM. If the timing that Chernyshev indicated is correct (and it was substantially the same as given by Gen. Batov to Col. Fitzgerald earlier in January), then the ABM system in question would appear to be the Tallinn system, as construction started on the Moscow system five years ago.

4. Other series of Soviet statements have, however, apparently referred to the Tallinn system as a SAM system:

a. In April, 1966, Marshal Malinovski said "New, highly effective SAMs have been worked out and adopted for armament . . . Our air defense means assure the reliable destruction of any aircraft and many enemy rockets."

b. Red Star in June 1966 said "Air defense forces have received new surface-to-air missile complexes . . . reliably assuring the destruction of any hostile aircraft and many of their missiles."

5. The credibility of Chernyshev's statements would have been higher if it were not for the fact that his main points had all been spread abroad by US broadcasts or by US newspapers and magazines in the previous two months. It would seem reasonable to assume that the Soviet Chiefs of Staff are fully aware of the importance of ABMs to their national security, that they are briefed on what the US thinks of Soviet ballistic missile defenses, and that Chernyshev could have consciously been feeding back what, according to these briefings, the US press and radio were saying, and that he would say nothing damaging to Soviet security. Chernyshev didn't seem to become uncomfortable, according to Col. Fitzgerald, until Fitzgerald pushed him beyond what US media had already publicized; beyond that point, he gave no information. Chernyshev's admission that the Soviets had been just a little sly in calling the Griffon an ABM raises the question of whether he wasn't just being a little sly again. (It should be noted that the Soviets didn't call the Griffon an ABM until the US press had done so.)

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6. It seems possible therefore, that, although Col. Fitzgerald's reporting has been immensely useful in general, he has been fed a line on the occasion of his reporting on the ABM question.

7. Col. Fitzgerald is now back in the US at Carlisle Barracks, and will presumably be available for debriefing. We should make a point of talking to him at length.



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