

CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTE FOR: Chief, Liaison Division

FROM:

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Liaison Division

SUBJECT: Background/Talking Points Regarding CIA/GAO Relations

1. CIA is not enthusiastic about dealing with GAO. GAO is an investigative arm of Congress, and we never feel certain as to how the information CIA provides is going to be used or whether it will be portrayed fairly. There is long-standing low-level tension in the relationship.

2. In 1978-79 CIA and GAO held "informal discussions" to try to establish mutually acceptable guidelines for their relationship. From CIA's standpoint, the main objective was to re-emphasize that CIA maintains the option of deciding whether and how extensively it will respond to GAO requests. In addition, CIA must retain the right to review and amend any GAO reports that reference CIA as a contributor.

3. In recent months we have had some difficulty with GAO in trying to uphold the ground rules of the relationship. The DI is willing to cooperate, where possible, on GAO projects that have been requested by Congress, but not on those that GAO initiates itself. Problems have also arisen on other matters.

- 1) GAO staffers directly calling DI analysts. This places our analysts in jeopardy. GAO must work through OLL.
- 2) GAO not accepting "no" for an answer. The DI does not have expertise on everything the GAO asks about, particularly on highly specialized economic topics. On other topics, such as tech-transfer, the material is too sensitive to discuss with GAO. On such matters we prefer to talk with the Congressional Committee or Congressman which tasked GAO.
- 3) GAO looking for research or editing help from DI analysts.

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- 4) GAO requests not being clear enough. ~~Joe Kelley~~ should submit written requests. His requests often are difficult to field because his information is inadequate.
- 5) GAO not recognizing CIA's right to withhold sensitive publications, such as NIEs. As a practice, we prefer not to give GAO any classified documents.

4. As a matter of fact, it is hard to sell GAO requests in the DI. It means extra work for the analysts, the risks of being misinterpreted are ever-present, and GAO's final products are not held in high regard.

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