

~~SECRET~~DDI #05631-85
18 November 1985

NOTE TO: Director, SOVA
FROM: Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT: SOVA Performance

Doug

1) Now that the President is in Geneva, and we can all take a deep breath, I want to tell you and your colleagues in SOVA what exceptionally fine work I think you have been doing, not only in connection with this week's Summit meeting, but more broadly as well. There are always risks in singling out particular areas of exceptional performance, but ones that leap immediately to my mind include:

- all of the work done for the Summit, from short papers in support of arms control deliberations to scripts for videotapes, longer range think pieces, and the NIE on domestic stresses.
- the work SOVA has done over the past months on the SS-20 problem, notable not only for careful, objective analysis but also the treatment of alternative interpretations.
- the work being done on Soviet costing, tying together for the first time those who track the forces, the industrial capabilities, and the costing.
- the work on Gorbachev's economic challenge and the options open to him for fixing those problems.
- the responses put together for the Director's reply to Senator Helms.
- the work done in recent weeks on Soviet activities in key Third World countries, including the recent efforts to develop a way to track patterns better.
- support for a variety of briefings on Soviet military developments and NIEs on new and complex issues, such as denial and deception.

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What has been impressive to me is the degree to which these efforts and successes have not been confined to just one part of the office but rather have reflected a quality performance across the entire organization. [redacted]

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2. Henry Kissinger has written a letter to the President in which he says very forthrightly that the analysis and evaluations of the Soviet Union he has seen as a member of PFIAB are "far better" to anything he saw during the years he was in government. Additionally, the DCI's comments in his letters both to Senator Helms and to Senator Durenberger in my view constitute a strong endorsement of your work. [redacted]

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3. SOVA has more second guessers in and out of the building (not the least troublesome of whom is the DDI) than virtually any other office in the Directorate. I have seen remarkable progress in the last year in SOVA's willingness to consider outside views and alternative interpretations as well as to try new approaches and methodologies it has developed itself. There should be no doubt in anybody's mind around town that on the Soviet Union, SOVA is the best thing going -- even as we bear in mind the continued need always to strive to do even better. [redacted]

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4. I just wanted you and those in SOVA to know, for what it is worth, what fine work I think you are doing. [redacted]

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Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence

DDI/RMGates/[redacted]

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