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DDI #220/82-1

82-400811

18 JAN 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Horelick and Becker Letter on Public Release of Unclassified Reports

Attached is a straightforward but courteous response to Arnold Horelick and Abraham Becker on their 4 January request that we reconsider our decision on public release of unclassified publications. The response has been coordinated with the Office of External Affairs and reflects the thinking that went into the ExCom decision of 2 July 1981.

STAT

Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachment:
As Stated

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Routing Slip

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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3	D/ICS				
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6	DD/O				
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15	C/EAS/OPP				
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17	AO/DCI				
18	DDI	X			
19	D/OEA		X		
20	EXDIR		X		
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	SUSPENSE	11 January Date			

Remarks:

Recommendation, please, to DCI together with a reply for his signature forwarded through EXDIR.

Executive Secretary

5 Jan 82

Date

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Rand
SANTA MONICA, CA. 90406

82-4008
DDI # 061-82

January 4, 1982

The Honorable William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

As students of Soviet affairs and as members of consultant panels advising you on these matters, we have been concerned about the unintended consequences of the recent decision to sharply curtail the preparation and publication of unclassified CIA materials for general public consumption. We are aware of some of the considerations that led to that decision, including the desire to lower the public profile of the Agency. However, we believe that these considerations need to be carefully weighed against the heavy costs that a stringent implementation of the decision is likely to entail. These include: (a) a weakened public understanding and professional knowledge of vital national security issues; (b) adverse effects on the morale of Agency analysts, particularly the best performers, and on recruitment of new professionals; and (c) ultimately, impairment of the quality of CIA research and analysis.

The Soviet affairs profession is heavily indebted to the Agency for its unclassified publications on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Most of these have been in the field of economics and they have made an enormous contribution to professional and wider public understanding of Soviet economic structure, processes and problems. The CIA is the single most important center of research in Soviet economics (including military economics) in the western world, and every scholar dealing with contemporary issues relies extensively on Agency publications. Moreover, they have also had significant public impact:

- CIA publications on Soviet planning, organization and economic development have been invaluable in furthering comprehension of Soviet economic affairs. CIA has produced, and promises to revise and update periodically, the first major set of national accounts for the USSR since the Rand-sponsored studies of the 1950s and 1960s. Studies of price movements, ruble-dollar ratios, simulations of growth patterns under various external stimuli, industrial and agricultural production and many others, have been mainstays of scholarship on the contemporary Soviet economy.

THE RAND CORPORATION, 1700 MAIN STREET, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA 90406, PHONE: (213) 393-0411

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- It would not be an exaggeration to say that CIA estimates of Soviet military expenditures in rubles and the dollar cost of these activities were one of the most important factors in changing the climate of opinion in the U.S. Congress and the country generally in recent years with respect to the gravity of the Soviet military buildup.

- The Agency's estimates of Soviet oil production called attention to a critical variable in Soviet economic growth forecasts. All subsequent analyses, whether agreeing or disagreeing with CIA forecasts, have had to take account of the Agency's thought-provoking analysis.

The last two points concern groups of CIA publications that have generated considerable controversy and public debate. It is understandable that the Agency should wish to avoid being the target of public criticism, some of which is uninformed and ill-willed. Staff members are too busy to respond to all or even most of the critiques; often security considerations prevent a point-by-point rebuttal. However, some of the criticism has also been helpful. It has stimulated reconsideration of the analysis and the underlying evidence and has sensitized managers and staff to key issues and new developments. Despite controversy surrounding successive Agency oil estimates, we believe that the CIA's reputation gained rather than lost in the outside professional community as a result of these publications. Because CIA is the only intelligence community (or even government) organization with significant competence in Soviet economic affairs, and is thus by far the dominant source on this subject within the government, it is particularly important that the Agency's intelligence product should be submitted, insofar as security considerations permit, to the test of external scrutiny in the general community of Sovietologists.

Indeed, the argument can be made that CIA should be doing more by way of external, unclassified interaction--including greater participation by staff members in professional meetings, and even Agency sponsorship of professional meetings. These activities have a direct bearing on your expressed goal of raising the quality of CIA's output. Conference attendance and open publication are also critical measures of professional self-identification, and are therefore of major importance in recruiting and retaining quality staff. We believe that greater intellectual outreach, interaction and even competition with the outside professional community are essential to the improvement of the Agency's analytical product.

CIA interaction with the community of scholars is also of great importance for the rebuilding of the shrunken academic base of CIA analysis of Soviet affairs. In the 1950s and 1960s, the intelligence community

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depended heavily on academic and other nongovernment research as the foundation of the intelligence analysis. In the 1970s, with the virtual disappearance of foundation money and for other reasons, including a change in the public's interest, the level of effort in nongovernment Soviet studies was cut back sharply. The result has been an equivalent curtailment of the analytical aid the Agency received from the outside, as well as of its major source of recruitment in this field. Increased outside interaction now would be a major step toward repairing the damage inflicted in the 1970s, and would thereby make a significant contribution to the Agency, too.

The CIA's reputation was badly damaged in the 1970s, largely because of certain aspects of its covert operations. Nevertheless, in the professional community--and not just among Sovietologists--there has been increasing respect in recent years for the quality of the Agency's openness. As a consequence, a very fruitful interaction was developing between work in the scholarly community and the CIA, and the joint products--for example, assessment of Soviet economic prospects--are probably stronger for that interaction. Severe curtailment of unclassified publication would stimulate invidious comparisons with the previous policy and reawaken old suspicions of ideological and political bias in the CIA's intelligence reporting. It would certainly adversely affect the quality of research on the Soviet economy outside the CIA and, very possibly, within the Agency as well.

We therefore urge you to review the implementation of your decision to curtail open publication, with a view toward minimizing the adverse effects on the Agency, Soviet affairs analysis outside the government, and general public understanding of some of the critical issues of our day.

Sincerely,

Abraham S. Becker

Abraham S. Becker
Senior Economist
Member, Military-Economic Advisory Panel

Arnold L. Horelick

Arnold L. Horelick
Senior Social Scientist
Member, Political-Military Advisory Panel

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