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CIA

16 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: OSI Assessment of Progress in the S&T Bilateral Agreement on Energy: Superconducting Transmission Technology

1. The initial assessment of Soviet capabilities in the field of superconducting transmission (SCT) technology made in November 1972 remains valid. It is too early to judge the true benefits and disadvantages of the exchange program. To date, the quid pro quo appears to have been equal for both sides.

2. For the US, the benefits to date have been limited to furthering good relations with the USSR. Should the Soviets eventually be successful in building the 100m and one km lines and making them work, the US could gain useful knowledge from these efforts.

3. While the Soviets seem to have ambitious plans, obviously designed to make them appear to be close to the world leaders in developing SCT cables, US experts have concluded the Soviets probably have not done enough background R&D to justify such plans at this time. Most authorities in this field feel that any advanced nation can build a SCT power line. At the same time, they question whether the cable will be practical. This consideration seems to be of little concern to the Soviets, however, if they are as bent on proceeding in this area as they imply.

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