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JPRS L/8331

13 March 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON LATIN AMERICA
(FOUO 4/79)



LATIN



AMERICA



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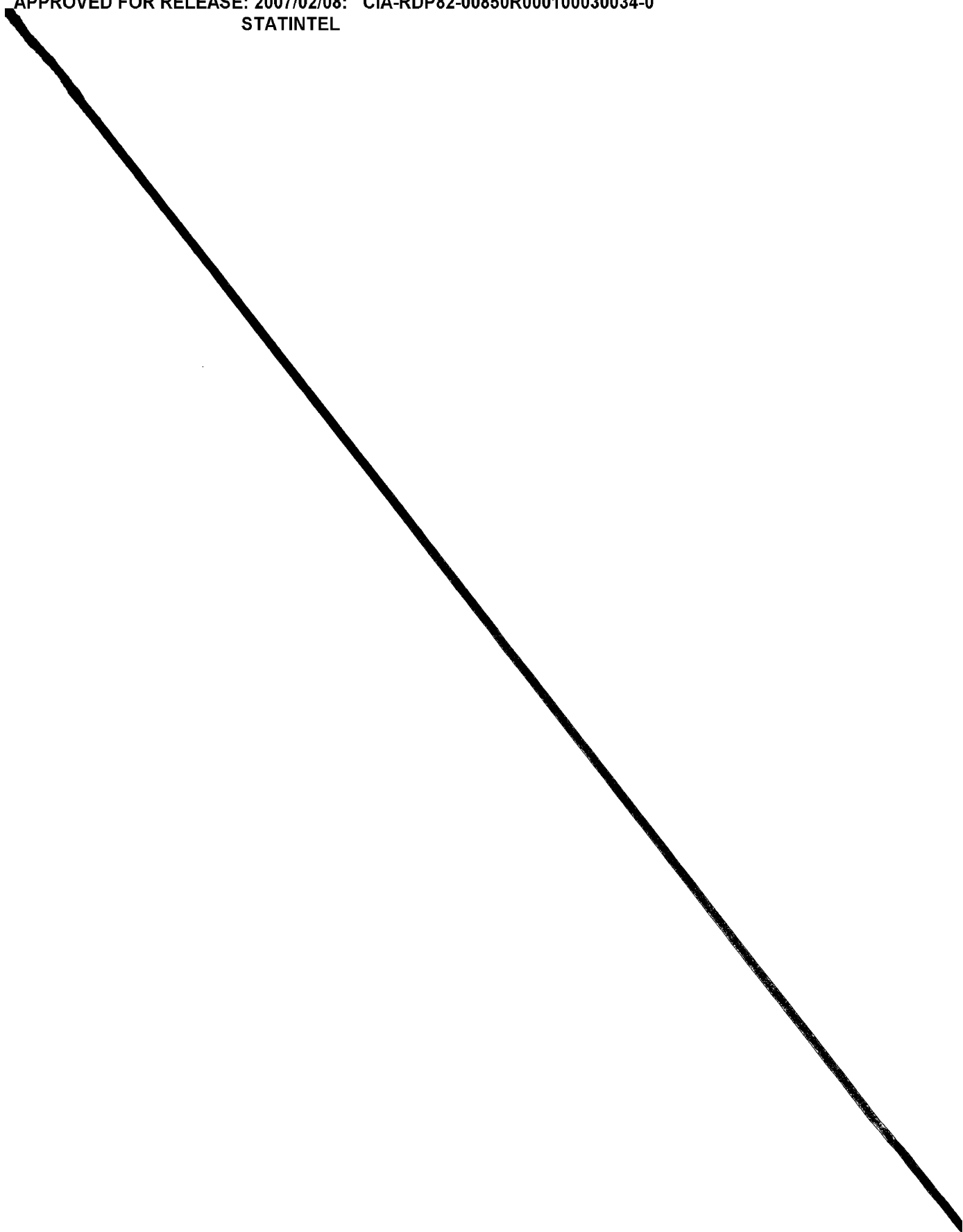
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CUBA

IDEOLOGICAL CONDITIONING OF CUBAN SERVICEMEN DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 79 signed to press 22 Dec 78 pp 64-68

[Article by Capt-Lt A. Shcheglov: "On the Ideological Conditioning of Cuban Soldiers"]

[Text] On 1 January 1979 the Cuban people celebrated its Liberation Day. Twenty years ago its long years of struggle against American monopolies and the Batista dictatorship ended in victory. A new era in the life of the country began -- an era of revolutionary transformations and of the construction of socialism.

The soldiers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the heirs of the heroic past of their homeland, are vigilantly standing guard over the peaceful labor of the Cuban people which is building socialism.

The development of the Revolutionary Armed Forces is being carried out under the constant leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba. In the decisions of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba it is emphasized: "The party attributes and will continue to attribute especial importance to strengthening the defense capacity of the country, to maintaining the combat and mobilization readiness of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and to the active participation by the entire people in the defense of our revolutionary gains and of the independence and sovereignty of our country."¹

Political education work which influences all of the aspects of the life and activities of the Revolutionary Armed Forces is assigned an important place in the accomplishment of these tasks. Its premises arose at the time when under the revolutionary dictatorial regime the young revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro and his fellow fighters were preparing to give battle to the Batista dictatorship. Underground workers explained the goals and tasks of the movement to the young people who had taken the revolutionary path and developed staunch fighters. Remembering those days, the Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces General of the

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Army Raul Castro has said: "In...the struggle against tyranny we did not forget about political training. Performing organizational and propaganda work, we created circles in which, along with other materials, Marxist literature was studied...we underwent a theoretical training which included a study of the combat history of our people and of the political ideas of the leaders of the revolutionary struggling Cuba."²

The importance of the agitational and propaganda work which was carried out during that period is testified to by the high morale of the 165 fighters who on 26 July 1953 stormed the Moncado fortress in Santiago de Cuba. Although the revolutionaries suffered a failure, their action was of great political importance for the development of the revolutionary process in Cuba.

In a speech at a Cuban-Soviet friendship meeting in Havana on 29 January 1974 the General Secretary of the CC CPSU and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet USSR L. I. Brezhnev emphasized: "Today, speaking about the grand hours of Cuban history, we cannot but pay tribute to the heroic standard bearers of your revolution. Under a severe dictatorial regime a handful of fighters courageously joined battle against the oppressors, fired the popular masses with their ideas and raised them to a victorious struggle. This was truly a great feat."³

At the beginning of the combat operations by the expedition of rebels who landed from the yacht "Granma" on 2 December 1956, along with oral propaganda, the newspaper EL CUBANO LIBRE began to be published and its first editor was Ernesto Che Guevara.⁴

The radio also played an important role in propaganda on the territory which had been liberated by the rebels. The first appearance on the air by "Radio Rebelde" took place on 24 February 1958. The radio broadcast information, bulletins on the military situation on the fronts, political commentaries, discussions, explanations of the meaning and ideas of the rebel movement, and reports about the repressions of the dictatorship.

Fidel Castro has emphasized that truthfulness was the basic principle of radio propaganda. The broadcasts by this radio station were listened to not only by the fighters of the rebel army and the inhabitants of the liberated areas, but by the entire people of the island.

In view of the importance and necessity of training special cadres to conduct ideological and educational work, in 1958 the first revolutionary political instructors school was created for the rebel army in the Sierra Maestra. During the war it conducted three recruitments and trained two graduating classes; the third graduation took place after the victory of the revolution in Santiago de Cuba.⁵ This school was the first organized form of the training of political instructors who

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played an important role in the educational and agitational-propaganda work among the personnel of the revolutionary forces.

The basic task of the ideological and educational work was subordinated to the attainment of the chief goal -- the rapid destruction of the Batista forces and the overthrow of the hated dictatorship. Along with this, great attention was devoted to propaganda and agitation among the personnel of the Batista forces. The purposes for which the rebels were fighting were explained to the soldiers, the justness of their cause and the corruptness of the Batista dictatorship were demonstrated, and it was suggested to them that they make the only correct choice -- to stop shooting at their brothers and at their own people, and, by uniting with them, to overthrow the rotten anti-popular system.

Toward these ends, the rebels conducted oral propaganda and radio broadcasting, sent letters and leaflets to the camps of the units and subunits of the government army, and performed explanatory work among prisoners.

The truthful words and the unmasking of the government's lies had a positive influence on the soldiers of the Batista Army. During combat operations hundreds of them voluntarily surrendered, while some of them declared a desire to fight on the side of the rebels.

In the end, the combat operations of the revolutionaries, supported by the broad popular masses of Cuba, ended in victory in January 1959. The role of the rebel army in the historic events of its country was properly evaluated by the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. It is stated in the summary report to the Congress that the "rebel army was the soul of the revolution."⁶ With the establishment of people's power in the country the revolutionary government devoted great attention to the construction of the armed forces. This was extremely necessary. American imperialism was doing everything it could to strangle the Cuban Revolution. First it declared an economic blockade, and then it went over to direct aggressive acts against Cuba. Raul Castro has emphasized: "The situation demanded of us that we create a modern army capable of standing against new and more powerful enemies."⁷

In October 1959 the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces was formed. Detachments of people's militia began to be formed. In the middle of 1961 the first regular units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces were created.

As Cuba developed in its socialist path its cooperation with the socialist countries became stronger and wider. Cuba's international positions, its interests, and its security were increasingly protected not only by the firm policy of the Communist Party of Cuba and the heroism of its people, but also by the support of the USSR and other socialist countries. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba -- a reliable defender of the people's socialist gains -- were created and equipped with help from the USSR and socialist countries.⁸

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The Cuban people place a high value on the Soviet Union's contribution to strengthening the defense capacity of the Island of Freedom. "Decisive military assistance was given to us by the great homeland of Lenin," it was noted at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, "which from the first, most difficult moments of our revolution provided Cuba with modern means of defense free of charge. The Soviet Union provided us with valuable assistance through its military specialists who taught us how to use weapons, gave us their knowledge of modern military science, and served as an example of modesty, selflessness, and a Communist attitude to life."⁹ The adoption on 26 November 1963 of a universal military service law was an important event in the further strengthening of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and in increasing their combat readiness.

During the course of the construction of the Revolutionary Armed Forces a great deal of attention was devoted to political education work. "During the period of the creation of our units," Fidel Castro has said, "and of increasing our combat readiness and strengthening discipline political work has been one of the most important jobs and, one might say, that this work is the most important work."¹⁰

In order to strengthen educational and mass cultural work in 1959 a department of culture was created in the Revolutionary Armed Forces. This is the period of the opening of the Frank Paiz School for the Training of Political Educators. Along with the revolutionary education of the servicemen, one of the most important tasks of its graduates has been the elimination of illiteracy (as of 1 January 1959 80 percent of the fighters in the rebel army were illiterate).¹¹

In 1960 the work on revolutionary education and the elimination of illiteracy in the army was headed by Ernesto Che Guevara. On his initiative, a weekly military magazine VERDE OLIVO began to be published.¹² Che Guevara activated political training for the personnel and took active part in preparing the first textbook for political studies. In 1961 the Oswaldo Sanchez School for Political Instructors was opened. In that year it graduated its first 754 political instructors who were assigned to the armed forces.

During that period the Administration for Revolutionary Education of General Headquarters carried out the immediate leadership of ideological and political and educational work in the armed forces. Political education sections were created in the branches of the armed forces and in the armies, while in the divisions revolutionary education groups were created. Political instructors were appointed in battalions and companies. In addition to combat training, political training for the personnel was introduced into the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

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On 2 December 1963 party organizations began to be created in the units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The formation of party organizations fostered a strengthening of the army's might, a rise in the revolutionary consciousness and morale of the soldiers and officers, and an improvement of combat training. By the end of 1966 party organizations had been created in all of the units (ships) of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

All of the ideological work in the Cuban Army is carried out on the basis of the decisions of the First Party Congress, the Program Platform and Charter of the Communist Party of Cuba, the decrees of the plenums of the CC and Politburo, the orders and directives of the Commander-in-Chief and Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and the instructions of the chief of the Central Political Administration of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Political agencies have been created in all of the branches of the armed forces, formations, units, military educational institutions, and institutions.

The political agencies direct all of the ideological and political work toward cultivating high morale-political and fighting qualities in the soldiers, raising the level of combat training and maintaining the combat readiness of the troops, strengthening conscious military discipline and the principle of one-man leadership, and also toward the accomplishment of the concrete tasks which are set for the units and subunits of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The Communists of the army are the active conductors of the policy of the Communist Party of Cuba in the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

"The party's work in the ranks of the armed forces," the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba emphasized, "contributed to the fact that their party organizations achieved a high level of maturity and development as a result of a systematic study from the moment of their formation of Marxist-Leninist theory, a strengthening of party organizational work, and a constant improvement of the quality of the composition of their ranks."¹³

As of December 1976 86 percent of the officers in the Revolutionary Armed Forces were members of the party and the Union of Young Communists.¹⁴

The members of the Union of Young Communists -- the organization of the advanced youth and a smithy of the party's fighting reserve -- are active helpers of the party in the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

The army organizations of the Cuban komsomol give their basic attention to raising the political and general educational level of the members of the Union of Young Communists and of all of the soldiers and to a

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deep study by them of Marxist-Leninist theory. They struggle for exemplary behavior by all of the members of the Union in carrying out their military service and also conduct work with the non-union youth, and so forth. More than 50,000 soldiers joined the Union of Young Communists during their service in the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and after having gone into the reserve they worked successfully in the economy.¹⁵

The commanders, political agencies, and party and youth organizations attribute great importance to developing and increasing the effectiveness of socialist competitions. They are organized between soldiers, tank crews, gun crews, squads, platoons, companies, and battalions. Since 1972 the victors in socialist competitions have been presented with the insignia "Outstanding Member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces."

The servicemen of the Air Defense, Air Force, and Revolutionary Navy have achieved great successes in socialist competition. For the first time in Cuba two units of the Air Defense and Air Force and one unit of the Revolutionary Navy have been awarded the honorary designation of Guard Units.

The basic forms of the ideological work which is conducted in the Revolutionary Armed Forces are Marxist-Leninist training for officers, political classes for sergeants and the rank-and-file, party education, and agitational-propaganda and mass cultural work.

The materials of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, the Program Platform of the Communist Party of Cuba, and the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba are studied in the Marxist-Leninist studies of the officers and in the political classes of the sergeants and the rank-and-file. The Cuban soldiers increase their knowledge about the history of Cuba and study the experience of socialist construction in the USSR and other fraternal countries. Thus, for example, in 1978 in the Marxist-Leninist training system the officers studied such problems as Marxism-Leninism on war and the army and the political economy of socialism; the soldiers and sergeants work on such topics as "The Communist Party of Cuba," "The Third Congress of the Union of Young Communists and Its Basic Decisions," "The World Socialist System," and so forth.

One of the most important tasks in the ideological work which is performed in the Revolutionary Armed Forces is the education of Cuban soldiers in a spirit of patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

The heroic accomplishments of the Cuban people are described by exhibits in the Central House of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the military glory museums, the "V. I. Lenin-J. Marti" rooms, and unit clubs. Year after year the relationships and contacts between the Armed Forces of

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the USSR and of Cuba grow stronger. Mutual visits by delegations for the purpose of exchanging experience on the organization of combat training and the ideological and political conditioning of soldiers have become systematic.

The development of contacts with the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the USSR's military aid to Cuba are helping to defend the gains of the Cuban Revolution. "It is known that the Soviet Union is also providing aid to Cuba in strengthening its defense," L. I. Brezhnev emphasized at the Cuban-Soviet friendship meeting in Havana. "We know very well, as, probably, others also know: Soviet weapons in the hands of Cubans are not weapons for attacking anybody, and not a means of aggravating the international situation. They serve the just cause of defending the revolutionary gains of your people, the cause of peace and calm."¹⁶

The relationships between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba and the other armies of the socialist commonwealth countries are also growing stronger and developing.

More than two decades have passed since the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba were born. Today it is a modern army which occupies a worthy place in the fighting ranks of the armed forces of the countries of the socialist commonwealth.

FOOTNOTES

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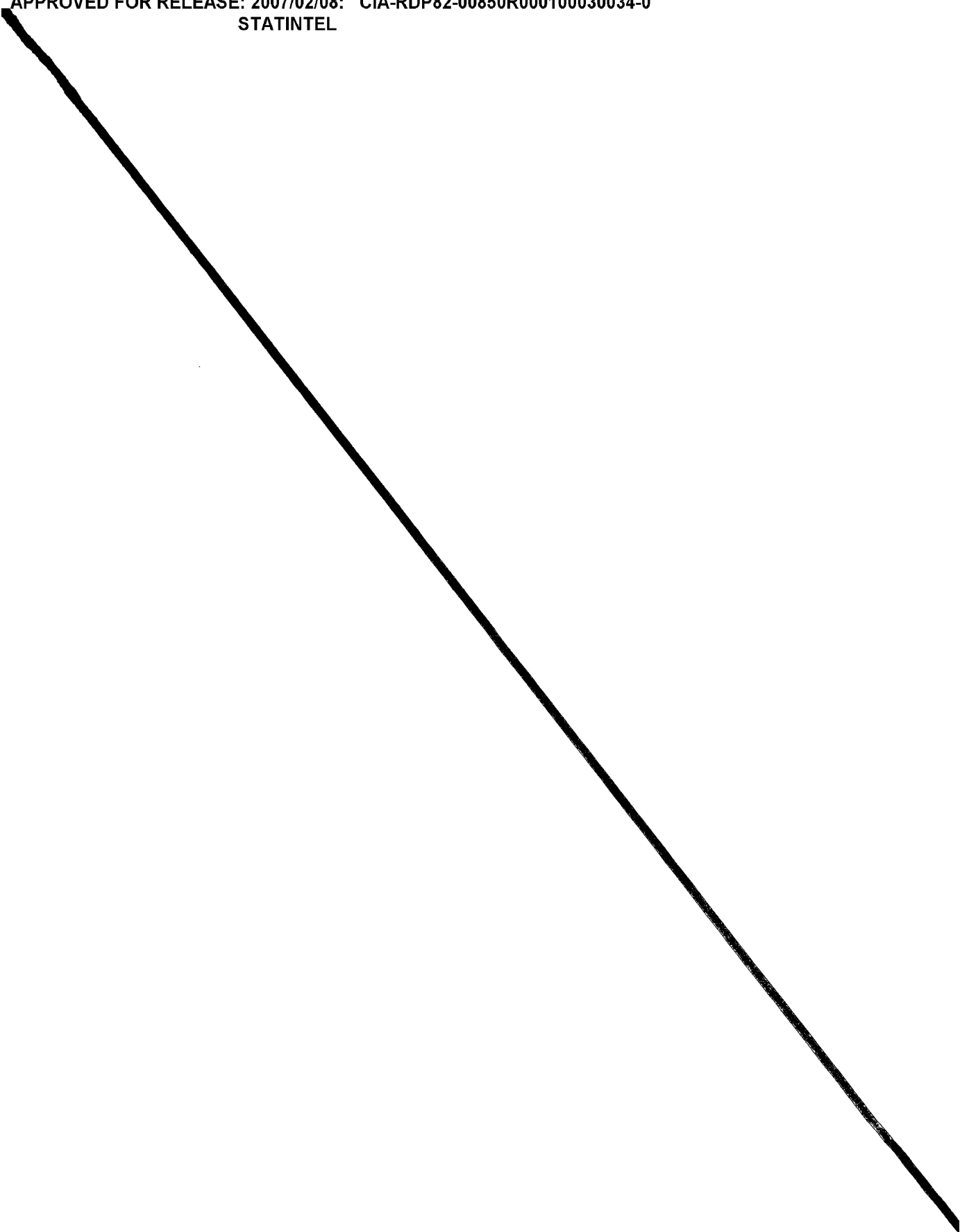
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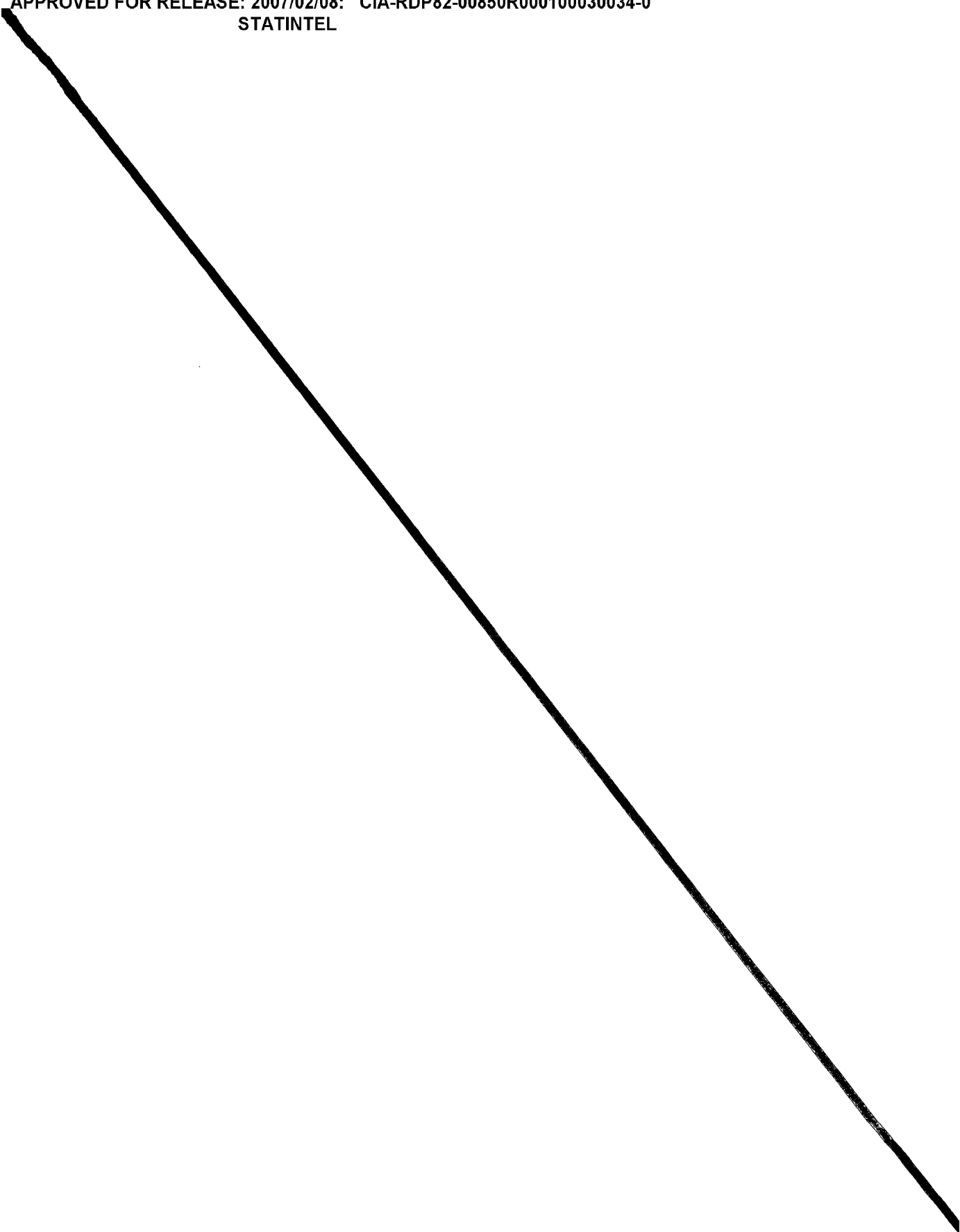
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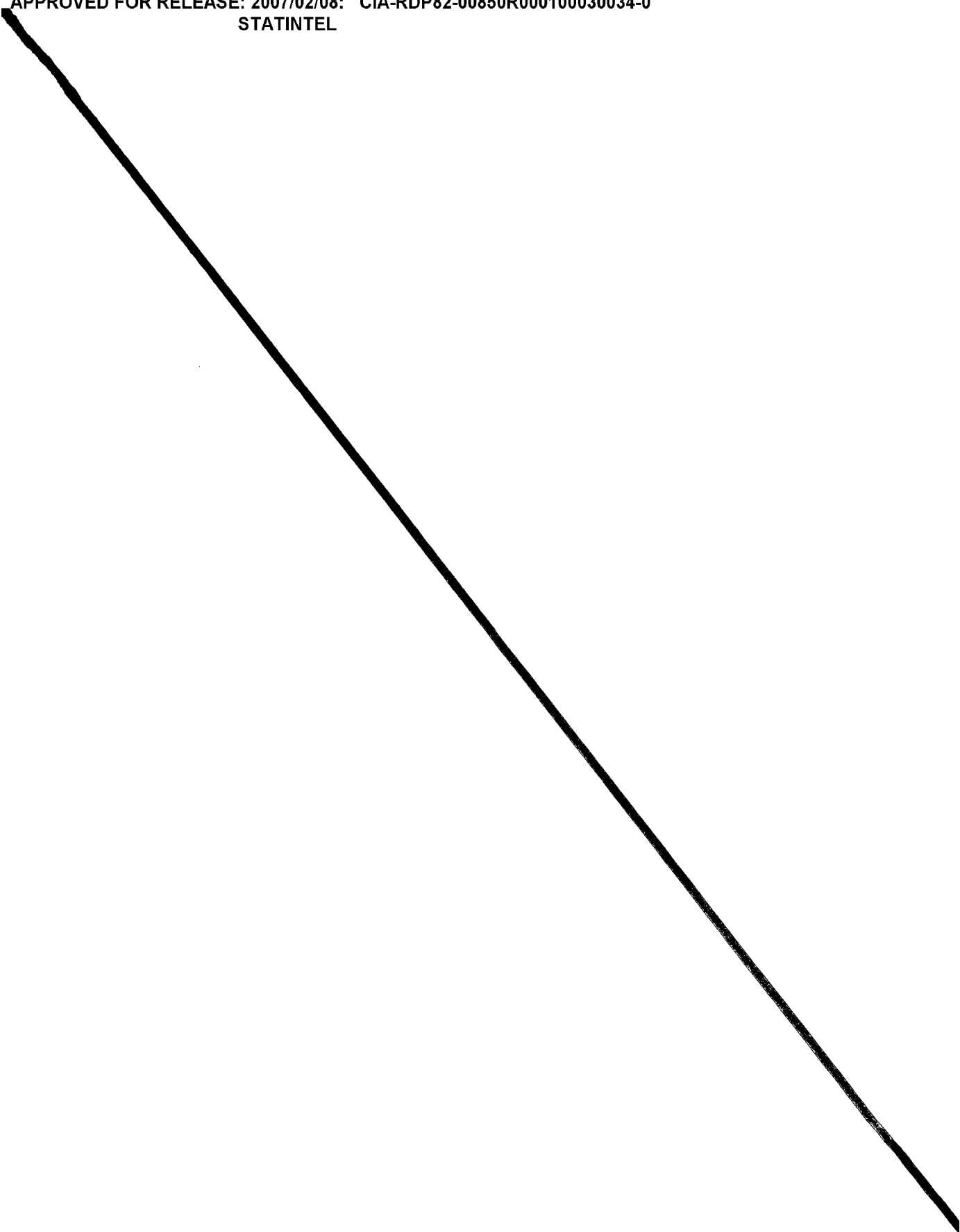
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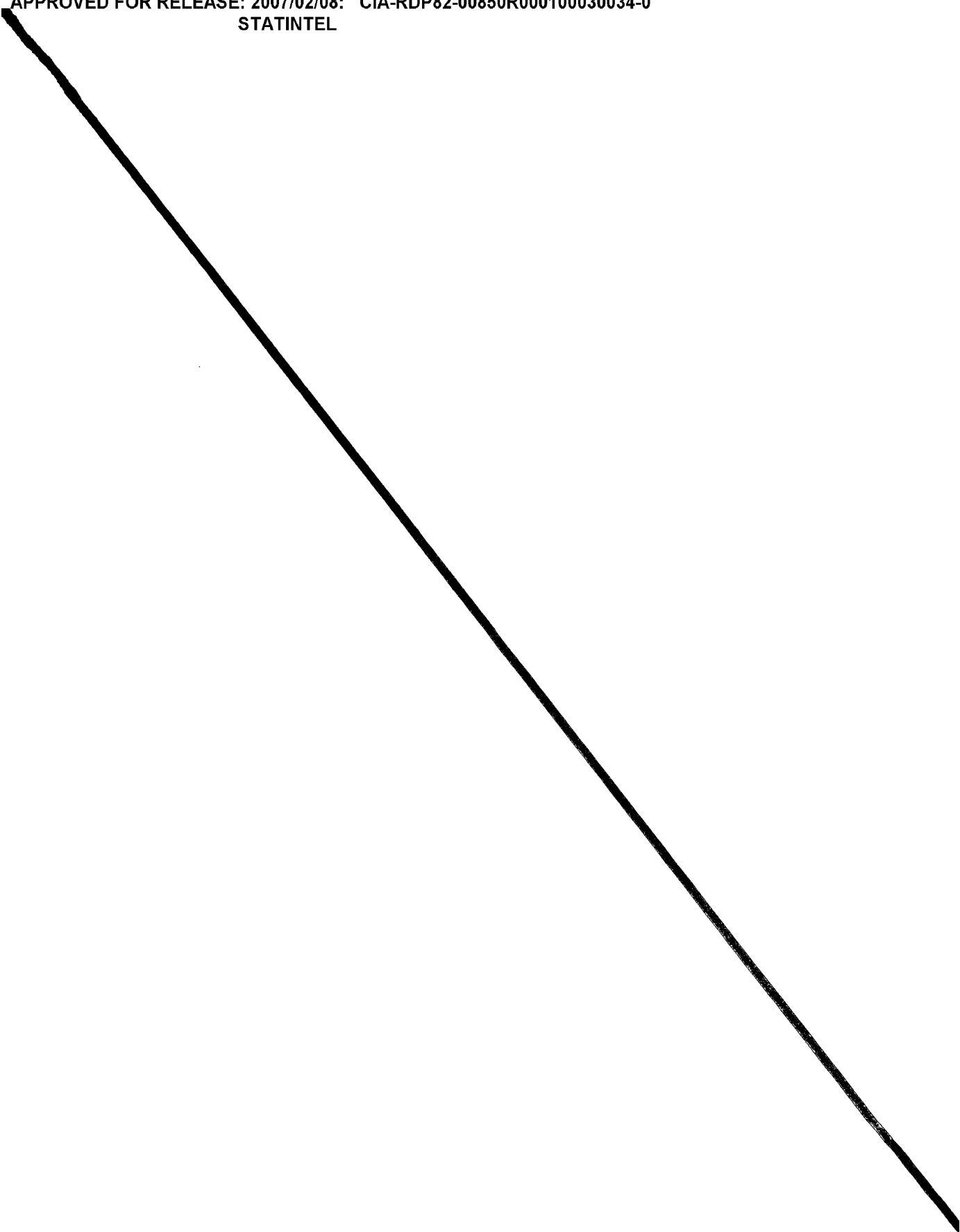
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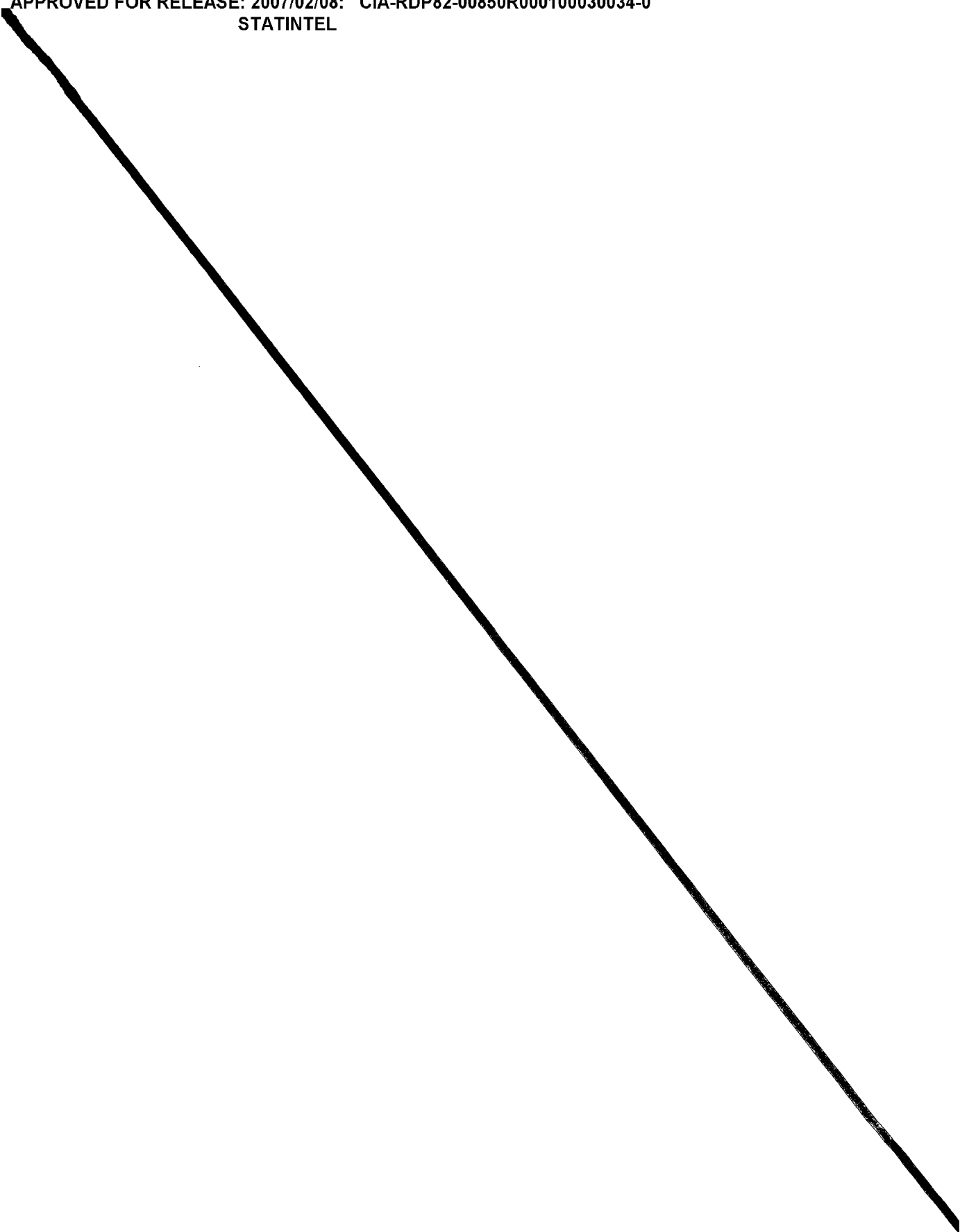
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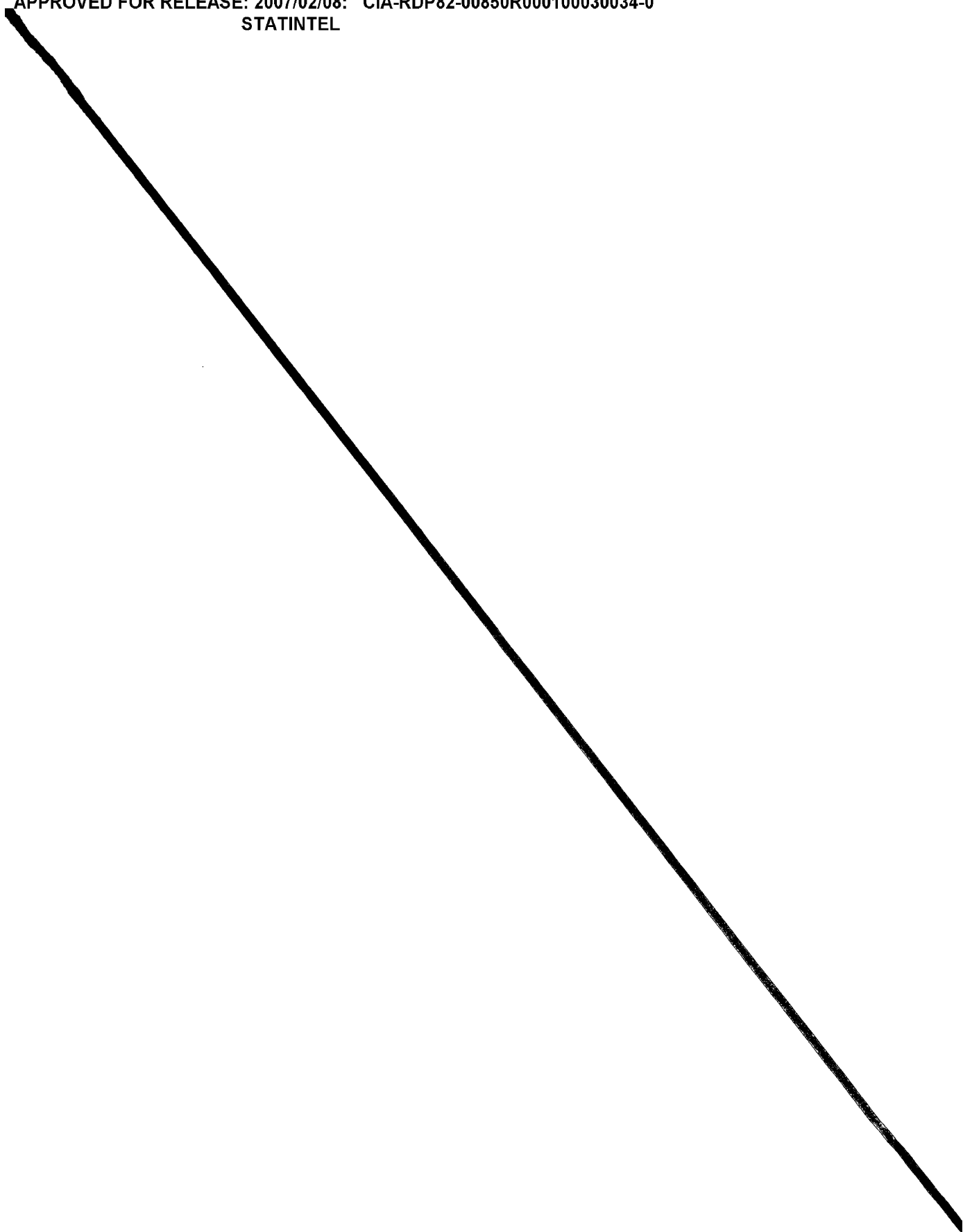
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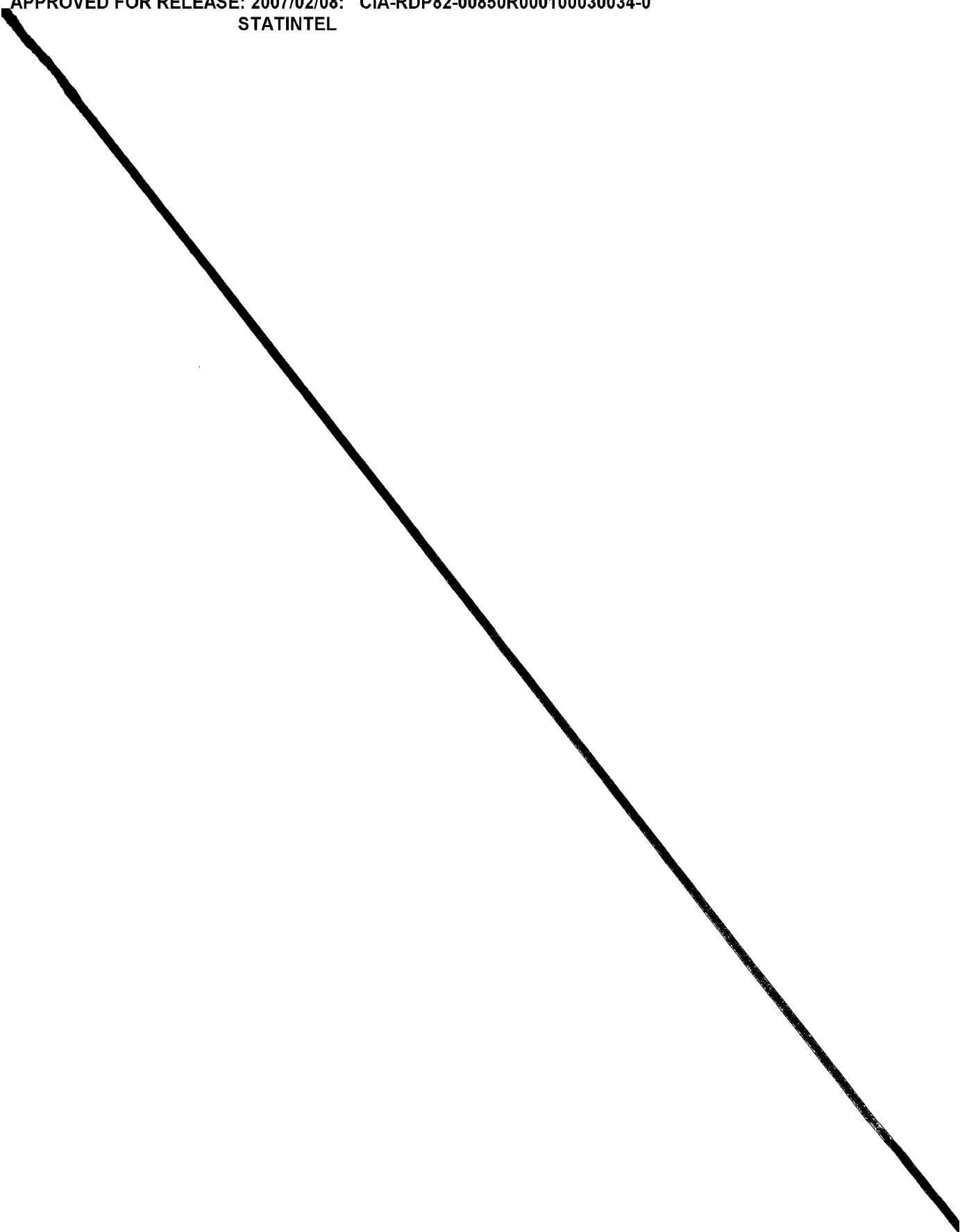
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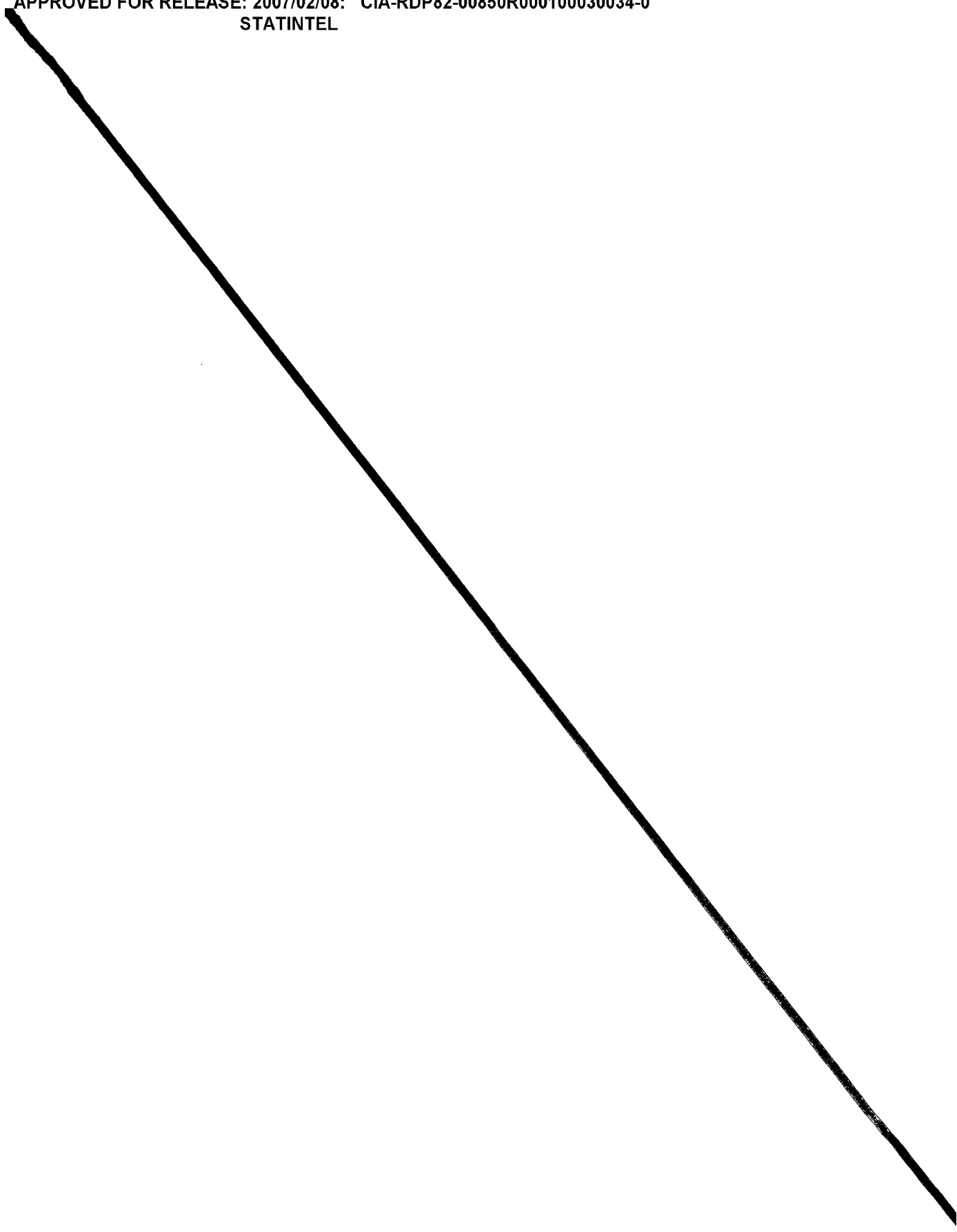
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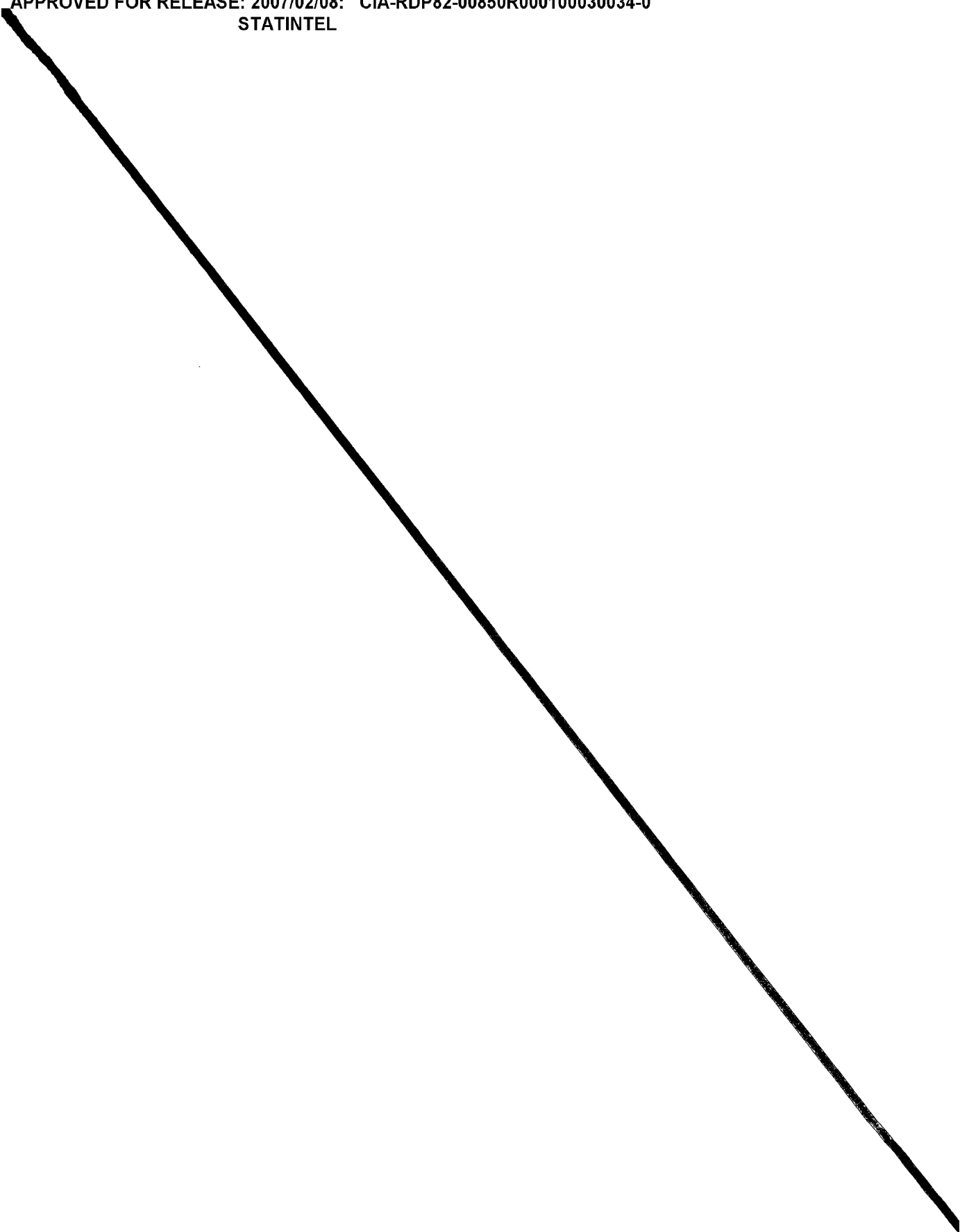
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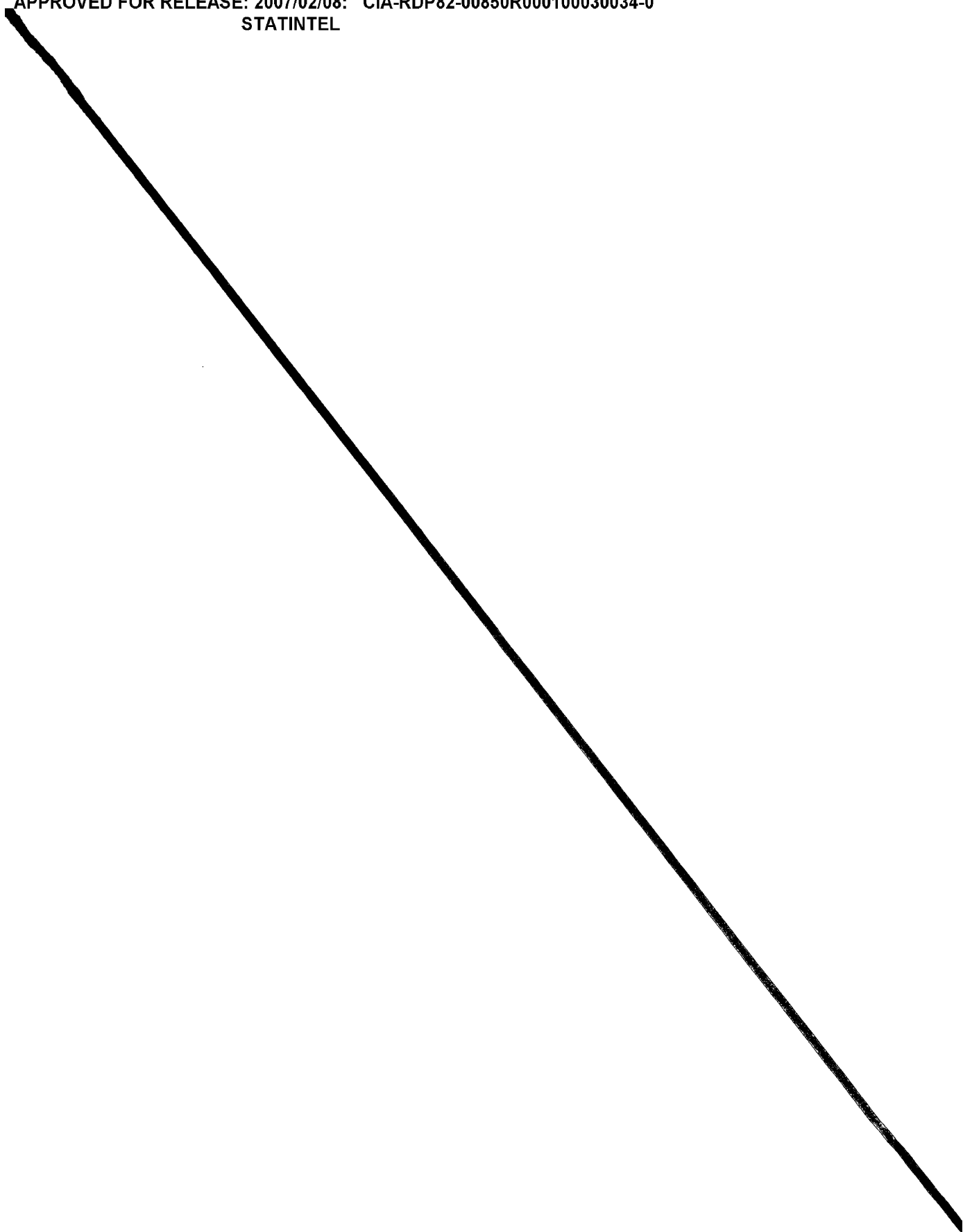
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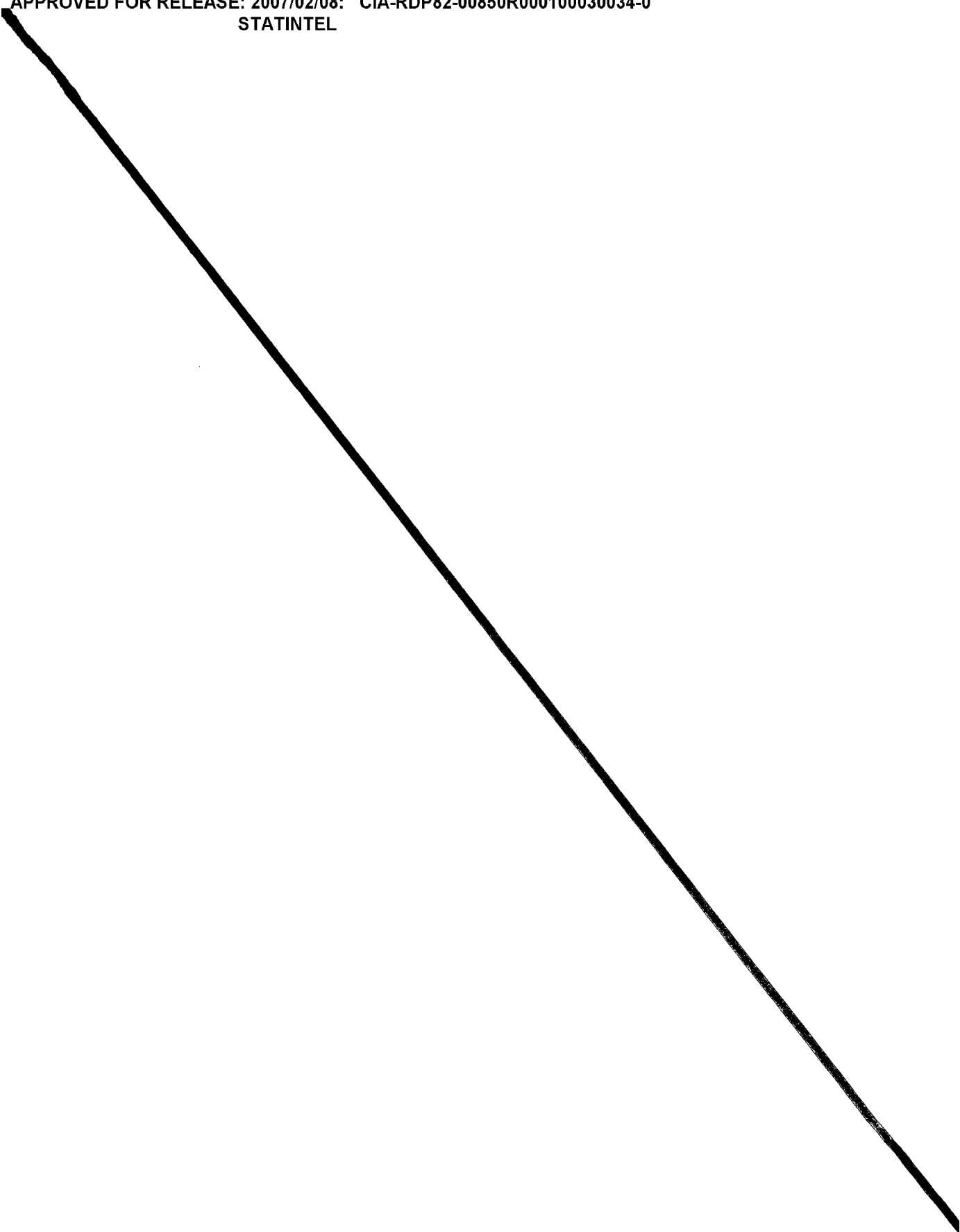
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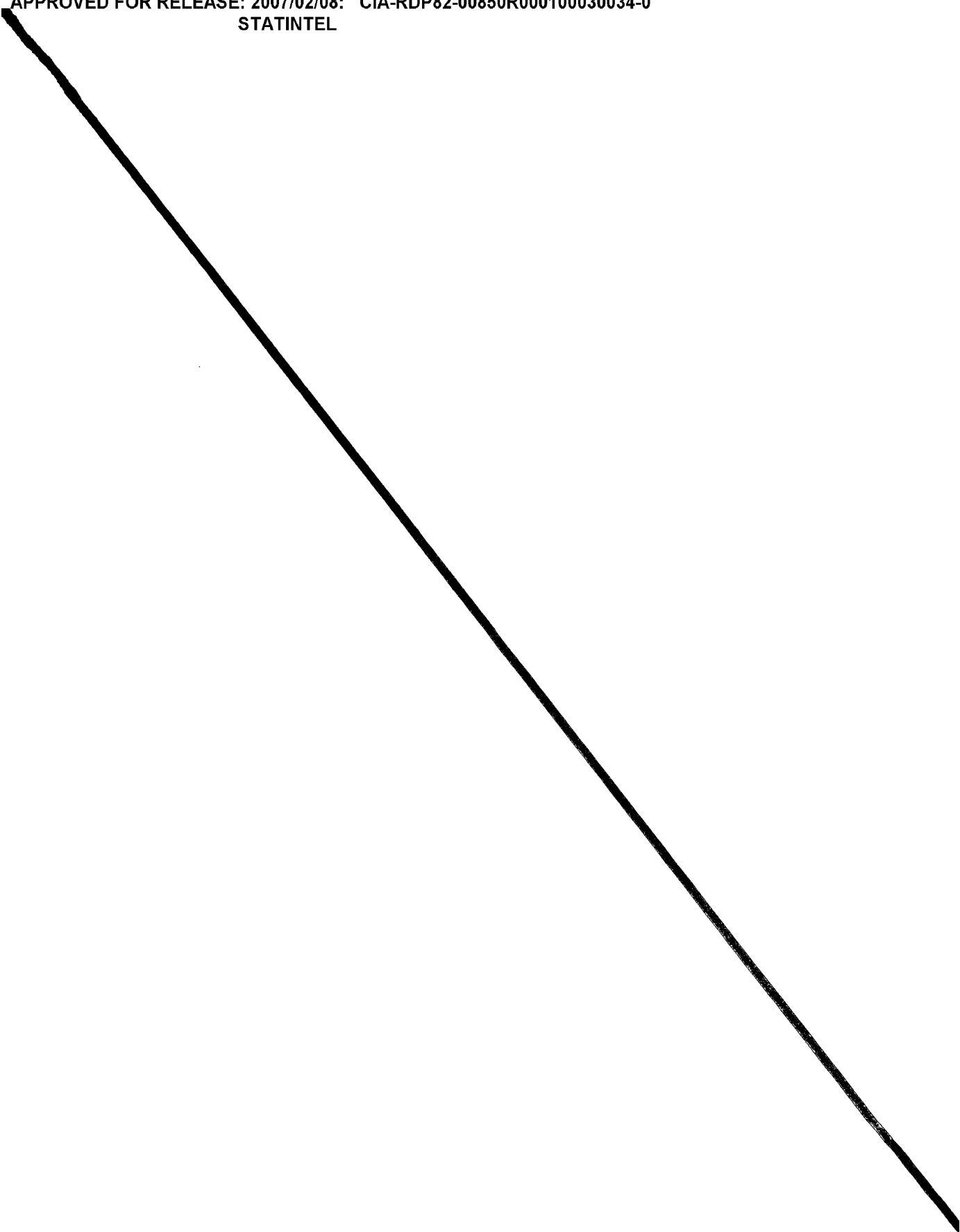
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