

29 November 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SR Division
SUBJECT: Considerations re Declassifying Military Thought

1. Penkovskiy provided us with eight issues of the TOP SECRET version of Military Thought. These were published by us as a total of 74 CSDB reports (71 individual articles plus three tables of contents). He also provided us with two complete and one incomplete issues of the SECRET version of Military Thought. These were published by us as a total of 56 CSDB reports (53 individual articles and three tables of contents). These 130 CSDB reports are now classified SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD.

2. Of these 130 reports, 89 have been released to [redacted] and 61 have been released to other NATO countries plus a few others. Our decision to release them to liaison services was determined in large measure by the fact that because Penkovskiy had signed for these documents in the GRU Library, the Soviet damage assessment already included them.

1.3(a)(4)

3. Any downgrading of the classification of this material must be done in coordination with MI-6. We believe that, in addition to propaganda repercussions, the following probable ramifications should be taken into account in any decision to downgrade the classification to UNCLASSIFIED:

A. Intelligence Community Reaction: The Intelligence Community would probably react favorably (or at least not unfavorably) provided they received advance notice of the kind described in paragraph 4 below.

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- B. Liaison Service Reaction:** The net effect on liaison services would probably be negative for two reasons:
- 1) Declassifying reports passed to them would negate the purpose we allegedly had in releasing the reports in the first place, i.e., enhancing our liaison relationship by passing highly valuable, sensitive material. The negative effect of declassification would depend on what real effect the release had on our relationship. This will vary from service to service.
 - 2) Liaison services would learn that we withheld a significant number of reports from them in a series which we had decided to pass. (The book, of course, implies the existence of still other material withheld.)
- C. Soviet Reaction:** Although our earlier release to liaison may very well have given the Soviets copies of the reports, declassification will insure their receipt of the series. This will upgrade the quality of their damage assessment of the case by confirming the consistent excellence of Penkovskiy's photography (98% read-out), thereby maximizing the damage assessment. Releasing the Russian language original to the general public (see para 3D below) would even further acquaint the Soviets with our photographic technique and its degree of success.
- D. Public Reaction:** Declassification would make a large volume of highly significant Soviet material available to students of Soviet affairs around the world, thus upgrading their competence to analyze subsequent Soviet developments. To be most useful to scholars, the Russian language original should also be released. This would require borrowing the Minox negatives from MI-6 and would have security ramifications (see para 3C above).

4. Prior to any overt downgrading of the classification of this material, an official notice should be sent to USIB agencies notifying them of our intentions and of concomitant changes in classification and dissemination controls of the intelligence reports. The CSDB reports per se cannot be downgraded lower than CONFIDENTIAL/NO FOREIGN DISSEM because of their format and report numbers, but this could be done along with notification to recipients that the substantive content could henceforth be treated as UNCLASSIFIED.

5. From a logistical standpoint, copies of the reports to be released outside the Intelligence Community would either have to be re-reproduced or physically sanitized by chopping off the top and bottom of each page and - for some reports - deleting various references scattered through the text. Time to be allowed for this would run from a few days to several weeks, depending on which method and how many copies were involved. It would make most sense to reassemble the material into its original sequence as it appeared in the various issues of Military Thought and present it in a single, coherent package.

[REDACTED]

Chief, SR/ER

Distribution:
Original - CSR Division

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