

'This Is Not Just an Intellectual Food

Following are excerpts from the opening statement yesterday of Robert M. Gates at confirmation hearings before the Senate intelligence committee on his nomination to be director of central intelligence:

Charges have been made that must be answered—specifically, directly, in detail and honestly. This is not just, as some have said, an intellectual food fight among dueling analysts. This is about accuracy and fairness. . . . Now to the allegations.

One. I am alleged to believe the Kremlin was behind the attempted assassination of the pope in 1981, to have ordered a study with no look at evidence of Soviet non-involvement, to have rewritten personally the key judgments in summary removing all references to inconsistencies and anomalies, to have dropped a scope note advising that the paper made no counter-arguments against Soviet complicity, and to have written a covering transmittal note unknown to the authors saying that the Soviets were directly involved in portraying my views as CIA consensus.

Now the facts. According to Mr. Lance Haas, the project manager, Kay Oliver, who was one of the drafters, and others, I told Haas that [then-CIA director William J. Casey] was convinced of Soviet involvement in the assassination attempt, but that I was agnostic, and I expected him to be agnostic also. . . .

Mr. Haas acknowledges that he killed the scope note as no longer relevant, and also that he wrote the transmittal letter, a letter which, incidentally, did not state unambiguously, or any other way, that the Soviets were directly involved. Indeed, the letter specifically says that questions remain and probably always will.

Several participants recall that I was the one who urged adding the section of the paper pointing out the inconsistencies, weaknesses, anomalies and gaps in the case for Soviet involvement, and that I was worried about the need for greater balance.

The same participants recall no orders from me or anyone on the seventh floor to build a case against the Soviets. Rather, the suggestion, in light of new reporting, was simply to look at the new evidence with a focus on the Bulgarian connection.

I did not rewrite the key judgments. Based on the evidence, the allegations that I drove this paper to its conclusions and then knowingly misrepresented it to policymakers are false.

Two. It has been alleged that I introduced into agency publications without supporting evidence that the Soviets used lethal chem-

icals in Afghanistan.

In fact, as best we can reconstruct, there was one item in the National Intelligence Daily in the later summer of 1985 suggesting this possibility.

I was out of town at the time, the item was initiated by analysts in the Soviet office, and I had nothing to do with it. The allegations is false.

Three. It has been alleged that I introduced into agency publications without supporting evidence information portraying increased contra successes between 1984 and 1986. In fact I refer the committee to national estimate of February 1985, "Nicaragua, Prospects for Sandinista Consolidation." And another estimate in March 1986: "Nicaragua, Prospects for the Insurgency."

In the key judgments of both you will find descriptions of serious contra problems and forecasts of further declines in effectiveness and unlikelihood of real improvement in contra performance. . . . The allegation is false.

Four. It has been alleged that I wanted an intelligence product that linked drug dealers

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and terrorists. In reality, we had heard outside experts contend this linkage existed and I asked our people to look into it.

Two major intelligence assessments, one in November 1983 and another in March 1986, and a national estimate in November 1985, all generally concluded that while there was some reporting of a narcotics dealer-terrorist connection, terrorist groups were not systematically involved in drug trafficking and were less likely to do so than insurgents.

The allegation that I insisted on analysis linking the two is demonstrably false.

[Five.] It has been alleged that in response to my pressure in 1985 and '86, directorate publications in November '85, January '86 and May '86 said that Iran's support for terrorism was down substantially and that Iran was becoming more pragmatic, all with a view to creating a climate for selling arms to Iran.

The facts are as follows. In November

1985 the publication of our Near East office, a publication by the office that I did not review as deputy director, said that if the Iranian radicals won in an internal power struggle there would be an upsurge in Iranian-sponsored terrorism which had dropped off substantially in 1985.

A more formal assessment by our Near East office in January 1986 noted that direct Iranian involvement in terrorism reached a peak in 1983 and '84, but since then had seemed less directly involved.

The terrorism review, another publication I did not review, of Jan. 13, 1986, clarified the picture. . . . Finally, in May '86, the Near East office published a major assessment. . . .

In sum, these and other publications during this period repeatedly stressed that Iranian-sponsored terrorism remained at a high level in 1985, and that Iran remained a major terrorist threat particularly to the United States. The allegation that I directed an abrupt departure from previous DI [directorate of intelligence] analysis on this issue is false.

Six. It is alleged that in 1985 I wanted an agency document to assert that Syrian, Libyan and Iranian support for state terrorism was coordinated by Moscow. And that over the objections of senior Soviet analysts I endorsed a national estimate and a monograph by an independent contractor to accuse the Soviets of coordinating terrorist activities.

The facts are quite different. I approved a proposal to have an outside analyst examine the idea that Syria, Iran and Libya were collaborating to harm U.S. interests, and that the U.S.S.R. was encouraging this. The drafter of the national estimate on this subject was an experienced CIA analyst, not the outside contractor. That estimate, a special national estimate, issued in April 1985, entitled, "Iran, Libya, Syria, Prospects for Radical Cooperation," focused on the radical states.

It documented increased efforts for cooperation among them on matters of common interest, pointed out the differences among them and stated that the U.S.S.R. derived benefit from anti-U.S. activities of these three states, even while recounting the drawbacks to the Soviets of getting too close to them.

The estimate reviewed what the Soviets would and would not do to support them. . . . The allegations about this estimate are false.

Seven. It is alleged that I killed an estimate draft in 1982 on the Soviets and the Third World, and another such paper in 1985.

The facts are as follows. As deputy director for intelligence . . . I was in no position, bureaucratically, to kill an NIE [national intelligence estimate]. On request I read the draft and I offered my reaction. . . .

Eight. It is alleged that I blocked a memo showing indicators of Soviet activity in the Third World either stagnant or declining. . . . In fact, while I may have found a specific paper inadequate, during the period 1983 to 1987, the directorate published a number of

assessments dealing with these issues. . . . The allegation is false.

Nine. It is alleged that I stopped a paper concluding that the Soviets would not send MiG fighters to the Sandinistas [in Nicaragua]. In fact, the pros and cons of this, and the constraints on the Soviets had been reported, and my note simply said that the paper did not go beyond what we had already said. . . .

Ten. It is alleged that I blocked a major research effort in 1984 documenting Afghan insurgent failures against Soviet forces. Supposedly my view that mujaheddin successes would lead to more dramatic Soviet actions served to block analysis of insurgent shortcomings and Soviet limitations.

What really happened? I said more research needed to be done to determine whether, in fact, the insurgency was gaining or losing ground in Afghanistan. That seemed to me to be relevant to next steps by the Soviets. . . .

Moreover, between the years 1983 and 1985, just to pick one period, seven major assessments were published on the war in Afghanistan, treating the strengths and weaknesses on both sides. . . . In addition, a monthly publication, *Developments in Afghanistan*, was initiated in March 1985. The charge that I suppressed information on Soviet problems in Afghanistan is demonstrably false.

Eleven. It is alleged that I rejected in 1985 directorate analysis documenting Soviet problems in Iran, and personally was responsible for the inaccurate assessment in the Iran special national estimate in May 1985.

In fact, a major paper was published by the directorate in May 1985, titled "Iran, The Struggle to Define and Control Foreign Policy", that explicitly addressed opposition in Iran to improved relations with the Soviet Union, especially among clerics and conservatives.

But the directorate paper also acknowledged indications of efforts by pragmatists in Iran to improve ties with the Soviet Union because of their belief that Iran was threatened by U.S. actions, the U.S.-Iraqi rapprochement of 1984, the course of the war with Iraq and a deteriorating internal political situation.

With respect to the May 1985 estimate, every single member of the National Foreign Intelligence Board approved that estimate. No one at the table . . . raised concerns about the Soviet part.

Twelve. The directorate of intelligence is accused of inflating Soviet aircraft losses in Afghanistan over a three-year period in order to support my views on Soviet losses. In fact, how to measure Soviet aircraft losses was a source of great conflict between our Near East office, which thought that all sources of information should be taken into account, and the Soviet office, which argued that only one source should be relied upon. . . . This was a dispute among technical experts. The infer-

ence that I was involved is raise.

Thirteen. It is alleged that I allowed a directorate of operations officer involved in the Iran initiative to provide his own reports to the NSC [National Security Council], and then to submit his own analysis of these reports to the president's daily brief, thereby making U.S. policymakers, including the president, recipients of CIA disinformation.

In fact, the DO officer in question states that he briefed the NSC on only one occasion, and he briefed the NSC principals on the Nov. 25, 1986, at Mr. Casey's behest. He adds that he never got from me, nor was given by me, permission to disseminate anything. Further, he does not ever recall producing any information for dissemination acquired from the Iranians in connection with the Iranian initiative.

A search of all presidential daily briefs in 1985 and 1986 has turned up no such article

by this officer. Moreover, he does not remember ever writing anything for the PBD.

Fourteen. It is alleged that in 1981, Director Casey directed me to rewrite the key judgments and change the text of an estimate to show extensive Soviet involvement in international terrorism. Then a rewrite of the estimate was ordered expanding the scope of the paper and implied despite evidence to the contrary Soviet support for European terrorist groups.

The facts are as follows. In 1981 I had no position supervising any analytical component. . . . As Mr. Casey and [Deputy Director Bobby Ray] Inman's chief of staff, I saw a draft of the estimate and I told them that it successfully and effectively disproved Secretary of State [Alexander M.] Haig's charge that the Soviets direct international terrorist organizations such as the IRA, the Red Brigade, Baader Meinhof and the Japanese Red Army.

But I also said it missed an opportunity to review indirect Soviet assistance such as money, weapons, training, safe haven and safe passage. They then ordered a redraft.

The [House intelligence] committee and its staff examined both the product and the process carefully [and] concluded that, "After an indisputably difficult production process the result was a very high-quality product. . . ."

Fifteen. It is alleged that I did not permit DI analysts to take footnotes in national estimates. In fact between 1983 and 1986 the directorate had at least 16 footnotes in national estimates and was included on a number of occasions in alternative language where the identities of agencies were not cited. . . .

Sixteen. It is alleged that well-documented conclusions concerning the failure of Soviet efforts to gain influence in Tehran were radically altered in 1985 without any change in

the evidentiary base.

In fact the May 1985 special estimate on Iran, the National Intelligence Daily of 16 May 1985, and the CIA assessment of Iranian foreign policy in May '85, focused instead on new specific evidence of Iranian interest at that time in improving relations with the U.S.S.R. and described the motives as well as the opposition.

Seventeen. It is alleged that I ordered the senior intelligence officer for Soviet foreign policy to be removed from the Office of Soviet Analysis.

In fact the director of that office has written that I did not order the removal of anyone, although I did express dissatisfaction with the product of the Third World activities division and its "thumb-in-your-eye" product style. . . .

Eighteen. The next allegations also concerned the May 1985 special estimate on Iran. The charges are: that the view that the U.S.S.R. was well-positioned to increase its influence in Iran were introduced without consulting Soviet analysts in the directorate; that the conclusions of SOVA [Office of Soviet Analysis] analysts were ignored; that the NIO did not vet key judgments with the intelligence community until the first coordination meeting; that the NIO informed participants at that meeting that I had approved the draft and it could not be changed. . . .

On May 13, the day before the community coordination meeting, representatives of all the relevant CIA offices met to review the draft. According to a memo by CIA's representative for the estimate, Mr. Charles Herseth, the discussion focused mainly on the paragraphs covering the role of the U.S.S.R. and of the Iranian army during instability—sections which, as Mr. Herseth wrote, the NIO had heavily redrafted on his own.

Herseth continues, "The differences between the draft and the changes I will pro-

pose at the coordination meeting are primarily factual and do not significantly alter the thrust of those sections." He observes that there was only one problem at the CIA coordination meeting and it had to do with discussion of the Iranian exile opposition.

The Soviet office was represented at the meeting. There was no mention in the memo of a substantive problem on the Soviet side.

The NIO, as he testified yesterday, recalls showing me the original Soviet office contribution and his rewrite and my preferring the latter. He substituted his language in the draft and without my knowledge or approval cited my agreement with that text. Even so, he claims in no way to have indicated debate was closed, only that that would be the draft issued for the next level of coordination.

The NIO said he made clear that differences could be pursued up the chain of command. Yet the SOVA analyst did not advise

their office director, Mr. Kerr, or me of their strong disagreement. And so as I testified two weeks ago, I was unaware at the time of their complaint. . . .

I attended the National Foreign Intelligence Board meeting on this estimate and all participants praised the paper. The principal drafter of the paper noted in a memo that I tried to avoid an INR [the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research] footnote on the internal situation, but INR insisted, and Casey ruled all views should be affected.

I, along with Casey, [Deputy CIA Director John] McMahon, and [Lt. Gen. William E.] Odom, then the director of NSA [National Security Agency], felt the difference of view represented by the footnote was so scant that it was unwarranted. After the meeting I called the director of INR who had not been at the meeting and persuaded him that this was the case and he agreed to drop the footnote. . . .

Nineteen. It is alleged that numerous inspector general reports over the past 10 years have described malaise and anger over corruption of the intelligence process.

In fact, inspector general reports have noted perceptions, especially in the Soviet office, that politicization exists, and these reports have continued to this very day. But the inspector general also stated that he was unable to identify concrete examples of abuse and, indeed, found many SOVA products that challenged administration policies.

They also noted that the perceptions problem seems greatest among junior analysts and that nearly all senior analysts believed the integrity of the process had been maintained.

Twenty. Finally, it is alleged that Casey and I created an agency view of the U.S.S.R. that ignored Soviet vulnerabilities and weaknesses and failed to recognize the pluralistic political culture that [Soviet President Mikhail] Gorbachev developed in a relatively short period of time.

In fact the documentary record speaks for itself. For myself, I call your attention to the memo I sent to the deputy director for intelligence on the 16th of October 1986, expressing concern that our analysis was missing the importance of developments in the Soviet Union. . . .

Even before Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet office in CIA was writing about his commitment to economic reform and the mixed evidence of his commitment to political reform. Some of these analyses were controversial, and I raised a lot of questions whether Gorbachev was being cast in too rosy terms.

But the Soviet office's prevailing analysis, that Gorbachev was a different, more reformist leader, was accepted and reached policy-makers. Overall from the early 1980s to 1987, the Soviet office provided a considerable body of analysis about Soviet problems, weaknesses and vulnerabilities, as well as the prospects for major change. . . .