

**Author's Note:** Written for the [HODOWE: Patriots' Day Challenge](#) on LiveJournal's [Section VII](#) community.



A politician will do anything to keep his  
job, even become a patriot.

*William Randolph Hearst*

## EVERY MAN A PATRIOT

BY [LAH](#)

### **Mid-April 1966**

Napoleon Solo circumspectly searched the face of his partner Ilya Kuryakin as the two men sat together at a commissary table in the New York headquarters of the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement. Technically they were just having lunch. Kuryakin, however, was

well aware Solo was looking for signs, indications as to what had gone on during the Russian's private meeting with Alexander Waverly that morning.

"Why don't you just ask me outright, Napoleon?" Illya finally confronted the other man.

Napoleon bit his lip for a moment and then responded simply, "All right, I will. What happened with Mr. Waverly?"

"Nothing happened," came Kuryakin's less-than-satisfactory response.

"Okay, be that way, tovarisch. Keep your damn secrets," quietly declared the put-out American.

"Nothing happened today, but something might one day soon," Illya clarified his response.

Napoleon merely cocked his head at his partner, refusing to take the bait and ask another direct question that would likely be met with yet another unsatisfactory answer.

With a sigh Illya put down the fork he was wielding on his noonday meal of meatloaf, brown gravy, mashed potatoes and green beans. He methodically folded his hands on the table, somehow reminding Napoleon of a schoolboy waiting to be disciplined.

"I might be recalled back to Russia," the blond at last gave a non-circular answer.

Napoleon blinked. "What? Why?"

"Because every country, including mine, is run by politicians. And every politician becomes a rabid patriot at will when it suits his current purpose," noted Kuryakin with definite bitterness invading his tone.

"Mr. Waverly has a deal with your government," Solo reminded the other man.

"Mr. Waverly's deal was with Khrushchev, who you may recall is no longer in a position of power in the Soviet Union.

"But Brezhnev renewed the contract. I know that for a certainty. As head of Section II, the Old Man filled me in on the particulars."

"Yet Brezhnev was not then and is not now keen on the realities of U.N.C.L.E.," Illya reminded the other man in turn. "The policy of keeping technical details of Thrush inventions from the full scrutiny of member nations has always irritated him and provided fodder for calling into question my personal patriotism."

"I will concede that point. Yet U.N.C.L.E. and its methods, as well as your dedication to same, has a champion in Alexei Kosygin, who I'm sure you recall shares power with Leonid Brezhnev."

Illya smirked. "Yes and no. The 23rd Party Congress recently concluded in Moscow. It resulted in a definite shift in power to Brezhnev's side with its emphasis on military defense."

Napoleon understood immediately. "Thus Kosygin is backing off his support of the multi-national cause of U.N.C.L.E. in order to insure he is not viewed as less of a patriot than others within the Party."

“Correct in one, Napoleon.”

The two men resumed eating their meals in silence, the air between them heavy with uncertainty.

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### ***Several Days Later***

“The possibility of you being extracted from the Command by your government is a matter off the table, Mr. Kuryakin,” Mr. Waverly assured his Number Two enforcement agent in no uncertain terms.

Illya blinked. “That’s decided without question, sir?” He found he needed to seek confirmation from the Old Man, something he seldom required. When Waverly said something, it simply was, and that was that. But this something was too close to his soul for him to not pursue verification.

Waverly nodded shortly. “Without question, Mr. Kuryakin. You remain as an operative of U.N.C.L.E. for as long as I decide.”

“May I ask how this was negotiated, sir?”

“With all due diplomacy. And that, young man, is all you need to know,” finalized the Northwest Continental Chief. “You are dismissed.”

Illya blinked once more before he gathered his wits about him sufficiently to reply with a formal “Yes sir” and retreat from his superior’s inner sanctum.

On his way back to his office, he saw Napoleon heading toward the elevator, whistling tunelessly but obviously gleefully.

“Napoleon, wait up!” he called to the other man.

Obligingly Solo let the open elevator car close its doors and travel on without him.

“I’m not to be recalled,” the Russian stated straight-to-the-point.

The American only nodded.

“You already knew?” Illya quizzed his partner.

“Mr. Waverly filled me in as head of Section II,” Napoleon admitted rather casually.

“Did he also fill you in on any of the particulars?” Illya wanted to know.

Napoleon smiled an enigmatic smile, definitely very Cheshire-Cat-like. “Maybe.”

“Anything you want to share?”

“Now Illya, you know there are certain aspects of my job I can’t share even with you.”

“Convenient,” muttered Kuryakin discontentedly.

“Hey, tovarisch,” Napoleon attempted to assuage the other man’s disgruntlement at not being able to glean specifics about his situation from his best friend, “rest easy in the knowledge there is no politician on earth that Alexander Waverly doesn’t know how to pacify.

“And I’ll add this,” Solo continued. “From my father’s point of view, without a thought for self, a true patriot stands up against the stones of condemnation and speaks for those who are given no real voice in the halls of justice or the halls of government.”

“Your father didn’t say that,” stated Illya certainly.

Solo shrugged. “So maybe it was Steinbeck who said it. Yet that makes it no less true from my perspective. You, Illya Nickovetch Kuryakin, are one of the greatest patriots your nation will ever see. You risk your life for the assured peace of our shared planet, not for individual attachment to any one country. Sometimes politicians need pertinent reminders about that and the personal costs it entails, costs not only in the physical sense but in the emotional sense as well.”

Illya squinted suspiciously at his partner. “And did Mr. Waverly perhaps delegate you, as the aforementioned head of Section II, to provide them such reminders?”

Napoleon smiled that Cheshire Cat grin again.

The elevator car pinged its arrival with impeccable timing, providing the CEA the opportunity to make a convenient exit through the sliding doors as he resumed his tuneless and gleeful whistling.

—THE END—

