



AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON EAST-WEST ACCORD

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Handwritten: **OLC #78-3715**
Media General

December 12, 1978

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

Several members of the American Committee on East-West Accord have expressed grave concern at leaks which have emanated increasingly from sources within the Executive Branch. In view of the American Committee's interest in SALT II, as well as non-strategic trade, I have been asked to request your comments on such situations as the following:

I. Security-type leaks. A number of magazines, such as Aviation Week, seem to have access to sources within the Administration and frequently publish articles which contain sensitive information which must be of great value to a potential enemy. A survey of articles in the New York Times since early 1978 indicates many instances in which such writers as Burt, Middleton, and Weinraub, have been given highly classified information by "sources within the Administration."

I would appreciate receiving your assessment of the volume of such leaks, their effect on the national security, and what you as Director of Central Intelligence have been able to do to stem these leaks.

II. Policy leaks. In addition to the leakage of security information, the sources mentioned above have frequently been used by officials to air policy disputes in the press in such a way as to enlist support of special interest groups, thereby prejudicing the hope one has of objective policy decisions.

I would appreciate your comments on leaks of this kind, their effect of the formulation of policy, and what has been, and can be done, to bring this growing practice under control.

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Here are examples of types of leaks ("leaks" are not necessarily "facts") which are of special concern to the American Committee:

A. With respect to the ratification of SALT II, there is on the one hand the leak to the effect that the U.S. is on the verge of a breakthrough weapons development. This tends to frighten the Russians. On the other hand, a leak to the effect that the Russians are on the verge of a breakthrough, or about to deploy some exotic new weapons, frightens the Senate. (See attached editorial from NY Times, 12/10/78.)

The effect of such leaks--all from the Executive Branch--is to defeat President Carter's efforts to bring SALT II into effect.


B. With respect to U.S.-Soviet trade, there have been similar leaks. For example, if one group of persons in the Administration wants to prevent the export of an item, the leaker seeks support of special groups by use of the press to peddle the leak, thus discouraging an objective decision based on facts rather than rumors.

There are, as you know, many, many similar examples.

We know you are concerned with leaks as we are--some of which are factual, others put out for the consumption of scoop-conscious reporters. We know it is impossible to stem all leaks, but it does seem in recent months that what has always been a trickle has become a running stream.

I hope your comments on this situation will not be confined to specific cases as the problem deserves policy attention either by the Agency or the Congress.

With best wishes,


Carl Marcy

Enclosure: NY Times editorial, 12/10/78

cc: Senator Inouye

Much Ado About Death Rays

Times
12/10/78

Is the United States in danger of being zapped into submission by Soviet death rays? That alarming possibility is being raised again by some weapons-watchers who believe Russia holds a commanding lead in the development of "directed-energy" weapons. These include beams of atomic particles, similar to lightning, or of high-energy laser radiation, a form of light.

According to one alarming scenario, the Soviets might perfect a beam weapon that could be mounted on satellites and used to destroy American missiles shortly after they were launched. Even more grim are suggestions that particle beams might be used to irradiate large areas and destroy human life.

Happily, there is reason to doubt the imminence of the threat, perceived chiefly by Maj. Gen. George Keegan, retired Air Force intelligence chief, and by the magazine *Aviation Week & Space Technology*. The Defense Department and C.I.A. find no evidence that the Russians are on the verge of a breakthrough or even engaged in a crash program to develop beam weapons.

The chief advantage of the beams is that they

would reach their targets almost instantaneously. But to have any effect, they must make direct hits and so be far more accurate than nuclear interceptors. Furthermore, laser beams can be blocked by cloudy weather. After spending \$1 billion on lasers over the past decade, the Defense Department acknowledges that "it is far too early to identify a military application for which a laser weapon system is uniquely suited."

Particle beams are even further from practical application. They could be more destructive than lasers, regardless of weather, but would require enormous energy and extraordinary accuracy. Moreover, a beam system designed to shoot down missiles would probably be as easy to foil as any other antiballistic missile system; it could be confused by decoys or jammed or overwhelmed by thousands of incoming targets.

Given the uncertainties and the vast sums already spent on lasers with doubtful results, the Administration's approach to particle beams appears just about right — exploring possibilities while deferring any major effort as "very expensive and premature."

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (O/DCI) *OK*

Routing Slip

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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2	DDCI		Y		
3	DD/RM				
4	DD/NFA				
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10	LC		X-		
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/PA	X			
14	D/EEO				
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17	C/IPS				
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SUSPENSE DATE: 22 December 1978

Remarks:
 Please develop response. If over your signature, please clear with DDCI and DCI.

Executive Secretary
 18 December 1978