

News Bulletin WALL STREET JOURNAL, 13 July, page 32.

13 July 1982 ILLEGIB
Item No. 1

The Soviet Forgery War

It sounds like a John Le Carre spy thriller. Soviet agents forge some official-looking U.S. documents and try to use them to stir up anti-American sentiment in Europe. There are letters from President Reagan, former Secretary of State Haig and other high-ranking officials. There are suggestions about a military coup in Greece to overthrow Socialist Premier Papandreu, a secret agreement for a U.S. intelligence base in Sweden, a letter to King Juan Carlos of Spain about ways of countering opposition to joining NATO and efforts to neutralize the anti-nuclear movement in Europe.

Although it may sound like spy fiction, it's all too real. These are actual forgeries by the Soviet Union, which were uncovered by U.S. and allied intelligence and released to the press last week by the administration. The forgeries are only the latest in a long line of Soviet propaganda and covert action measures against the U.S.

The Central Intelligence Agency presented a lengthy, detailed report to Congress in 1980 about the Soviet Union's efforts to sway public opinion against the U.S. in Europe and elsewhere. The report cited some 150 anti-American forgeries, many on official-looking stationery and supposedly signed by top U.S. officials, which were uncovered by the CIA. It "conservatively" estimated that the Soviet Union spends \$3 billion a year on such propaganda and covert action.

The Soviet Union's propaganda war has manifold aims: to influence world public opinion against U.S. policies; to portray the U.S. as an aggressive and "imperialist" power; to discredit those foreign governments and

officials who cooperate with the U.S.; to obfuscate the true nature of Soviet actions and intentions, and to create a favorable environment for the execution of Soviet foreign and military policies.

John McMahon, who presented the CIA's report to Congress in 1980 and recently replaced Admiral Bobby Inman as deputy director of the agency, told Congress: "There is a tendency sometimes in the West to play down the significance of foreign propaganda and to cast doubt on the efficacy of covert action as instruments of foreign policy. Soviet leaders, however, do not share such beliefs. They regard propaganda and covert action as auxiliary instruments in the conduct of their foreign policy by conventional diplomatic, military and economic means."

The latest disclosure of the Soviet forgery campaign is another reminder that the Kremlin leadership is conducting an orchestrated war of ideas against the West. Americans have generally been reluctant to recognize this, quickly dismissing suggestions that Soviet cultivation may play a crucial though of course not total role in the growth of international terrorism and domestic discord in Western societies. This reluctance is understandable, since conspiracy is alien to the American experience while red-baiting demagogy is not.

Yet no American interest—least of all the avoidance of demagogy—will be served if serious Americans fail to recognize the nature of the challenge we face. When we are reminded that the Soviets use forgery as a routine propaganda tool, we have to ponder to what other lengths they may go.