

Walt, Elmo R.  
P - Bagley, Worth H.  
SECRET  
CIA-3-93 CIA Pub

NAVY TIMES  
13 NOVEMBER 1978

COMMENTARY

# CIA Is Out in the Cold in Role As Carter Public Affairs Arm

By ELMOR R. ZUMWALT  
And WORTH H. BAGLEY

THE CIA is fast becoming a purveyor of constructed news on the Soviet Union for President Carter. This CIA reporting ignores events in the United States and invariably supports Carter foreign policies.

Thus, according to the CIA, there are glad tidings that imply we are gaining an advantage in United States-Soviet competition.

Soviet debt to world bankers is so high that interest payments are slowing economic growth, according to the agency.

But the CIA skimps on details. We are not told what Soviet capital investment is being made with the immense amounts of borrowed funds nor the extent to which industrial modernization is being achieved.

And the agency does not provide a sensible frame of reference to measure Soviet progress. It does not tell us that Western experts foresee U.S. annual economic growth falling to less than two percent next year. That fall in productivity will occur because Americans do not have dollars for investment and expansion.

Having told us that Soviet economy is stagnant because it is mired in debt service payments, the CIA goes on to say that this "stagnating" industrial apparatus will seriously diminish domestic oil reserves in the coming decade.

The CIA seems to want it both ways. The Soviet economy is stalled, but if it isn't it will be.

(In any event, non-CIA observers don't anticipate any serious decline in Soviet oil surplus in the 1980s.)

The CIA desire to serve the President also is extending into the defense field. A recent CIA report informed the American people that the Soviets have not tested their new land-based strategic nuclear missiles.

This is good news for those who believe a SALT II agreement will constrain Soviet arms. The United States wants to include in such an agreement a provision limiting deployment of new nuclear weapons not already tested when the accord is signed. Opponents of SALT II base their arguments on evidence the Soviets are hell-bent on expanding their missile arsenal. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown had previously reported Soviet development of huge, new, land-based missiles, a Soviet advance that is again at odds with the spirit — if not the substance — of the 1972 SALT I agreement.

But according to the CIA, the Soviets have delayed tests. This creates the impression that the President's moral suasion must now be working on the hard-line Kremlin.

But again the CIA restrained itself from telling Americans what the Soviets are doing. In the past few months Moscow has tested a new submarine-launched strategic nuclear ballistic missile. For the first time, that type missile is fitted with multiple re-entry vehicles. In fact, each missile has the capability to deploy seven MIRVs. But, just as important, other observed Soviet strategic nuclear missile tests show a great improvement in accuracy — within 200 yards at 6000 miles. In combination with megatonnage and throw weight advantages, these two developments give the Soviet Union the capability for a nuclear first strike against the United States in the mid 1980s.

While the CIA was avoiding telling the American public this bad news, Mr. Carter's arms control agency produced a study claiming an indefinite U.S. lead in strategic nuclear destructive capability. Alarmed by the slanted analysis in that report, informed observers of SALT outside the government have refuted its conclusions fact by fact.

Mr. Carter says the CIA can thereby verify what the Soviet Union is doing with its nuclear strategic forces and thus protect the United States in SALT agreement.

But our photographs cannot invade Soviet research laboratories or the minds of Soviet decision-makers so its news will be late. Former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird has written of Soviet cheating in SALT I, a fact that became evident to the United States only after it had been achieved, as was the discovery of their oversized missiles. The President seems to have forgotten that this is a world that has already seen Soviet nuclear blackmail resisted by us with our then nuclear superiority in the Cuban crisis of 1962 and acceded to by us in the October 1973 Mideast crisis after our superiority had waned.

The CIA also has some public comments on Soviet non-nuclear or conventional forces. A recent CIA report informs us that Soviet manpower will be inadequate in the 1980s to operate their larger complement of modern combat arms.

But, perhaps unknown to the CIA, the United States and the West have the same problem. We are grappling with the issue now and it may be worse than in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet problem, according to the CIA, is a scarcity of qualified technical manpower. However, while the Kremlin can simply conscript the needed technical trainees, the United States, under the voluntary system may very well be unable to recruit the men and women in sufficient numbers.

The CIA's new role as the President's public relations arm is risky. It won't be long before the CIA is unable to distinguish between fact and prejudice. From what we can see now is the time to understand the difference.

Copyright 1978, Los Angeles Times

sought to offset the loss of the administration's credibility in this case by publicly revealing the