

The Mind Bogglers

Speaking of the spy trade, one of the most absurd of its manifestations has been for years the microwave radiation of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow by the Soviet intelligencers. No doubt we do the same sort of thing to them, but one somehow hears less about it. This electronic cooking of our establishment near the Kremlin has been in the news lately because the Russians have apparently been applying sporadic bursts of intense radiation. Some spooks of our own think that the Soviet Helmses are either trying to activate balky listening devices planted there earlier or else to interfere with our eavesdropping equipment.

The espionage world doesn't mind having its nonsensical ways exposed for all the world to see. It has a vested interest in the notion that secrets, dark or light, really exist and the comedy of the microwaves may even serve as an advertisement for the industriousness of the snoopers. After all, the public never gets to know what if anything this second-rate 007 game produces. After years of microwaving, scientists know that sustained radiation can cause depression and absent-mindedness. Perhaps that is all the Russians are after—not intelligence but just to shove our diplomats down into the dumps. And maybe, tit for tat, we have theirs mooning in Washington. It isn't work for adults.