

 World

U.S. Embassy radiation story is fraud: Russ

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MOSCOW—Soviet authorities rejected a report of radiation hazards at the American Embassy Wednesday as "a trumped-up story from beginning to end." They said enemies of detente were behind it.

The Soviet position, the first public comment since the radiation scare surfaced 10 days ago, was published in the government newspaper Izvestia. The news agency Tass carried the full text several hours before Izvestia went to press, an unusual move that indicated the authoritative importance attached to it.

Izvestia said that Soviet and American specialists have measured radiation fields at the embassy and found them well within Soviet and American safety tolerances.

It suggested that the Americans were producing much of the radiation with their own array of sophisticated communications equipment and antennas planted on the embassy roof which, it said, "is equipped like a ship."

IZVESTIA MADE no direct reference to assertions by United States sources that the radiation was caused by Soviet-operated microwave beams used to control and activate listening devices inside the embassy. According to the sources, U. S. Ambassador Walter J. Stoessel warned embassy staffers of possible health hazards from the microwaves.

But the warnings were ostensibly secret, and the embassy has refused all comment on the press reports on them. That no-comment rule extended to the report appearing in Izvestia.

"We can't act alone on this," an embassy source said. "We'll have to wait until Washington sees it."

Since the start of the microwave scare the embassy has been under rigid state Department instructions to shun all public comment. But so many staff members were told of the radiation hazards that copious press leaks were guaranteed, and they kept the story alive for several days.

IZVESTIA WEDNESDAY maintained that the leaks were intentional, and that they were inspired by "circles that oppose the line of maintaining and developing good, normal relations between the USSR and the United States."

"Unambiguous hints were dropped to correspondents that something should leak into the press in a light helpful to the authors' fabrications," it said. "In a word, the invention began to emit a foul smell. Needless to say, this is a trumped-up story from beginning to end."

THE TONE of the Izvestia article indicated that the problem has been extensively discussed and analyzed jointly by diplomats and technicians of the two countries.

"The fabrication has been exposed, but despite the plain facts, the noisy misinformation campaign has not stopped," Izvestia said, apparently referring to Soviet explanations given to the Americans. "One cannot help asking why it is needed, and by whom."

Answering its question, the newspaper concluded that enemies of detente are responsible.

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