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# Soviet Disinformation



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We have heard the media—my profession—accused of being biased, cynical, conspiratorial, lazy and apathetic. I plan to be a little more critical. Legions of pseudo-intellectuals, both Western and non-Western alike, carefully encouraged by Marxist disinformation specialists, have seized upon Third World themes as so many pegs on which to hang very facile and instant anti-American cliches.

What has been going on for some time now, quite openly in my judgment, is the introduction into Western politics in general and American politics in particular of a radical anti-U.S. Third World ideology. It is reflected in our major media outlets which see America as the villain. America the racist. America the exploiter. America on the wrong side of history.

Carlos Rangel, a very well-known Venezuelan author and journalist, in his latest book *The Third World and the West*, documents how millions of people throughout the developing world have been disinformed into believing

that Yankee bogeymen are responsible for most of what goes wrong in their countries.

Jean-Francois Ravel, France's most important media voice, a man who came from the left, for 10 years edited France's most important magazine, *L'Express*. In his latest best seller *How Democracies Perish*, to be published next month by Doubleday, he demonstrates like Rangel how disinformation has quite literally invented a new ideology that's called "Third World-ism." It has one basic principle: The consumer society has stifled the revolutionary ardor of Western workers and, ergo, it is now up to the problems and pressures of the Third World to bring down capitalism.

This new ideology is Moscow's secret weapon for destabilizing the West and eroding our will to resist. Under this false flag of convenience, revolutions have quite literally been highjacked by a tiny minority of Marxists who then proceed to impose a worse form of dictatorship than the one they overthrew.

The good news, ladies and gentlemen, is that it ain't working. Marxism is proving to be a catastrophic failure all over the Third World. And, miracle of miracles, a prominent American academic and long-time sympathizer of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has publicly conceded that he was wrong, yet another victim of disinformation. His name is Dr. Robert S. Leiken, the Carnegie Endowment Scholar who edited what was described as the Democratic alternative to the bipartisan Kissinger Commission Report on Central America which, as you may recall, last January documented the scale and the scope of the Soviet-Cuban enterprise to outflank

the United States in Central America.

Dr. Leiken has now written an astonishing repudiation of his previously held pro-Sandinista views on Nicaragua. Leiken's untold story about the Sandinistas—at least untold in our major media outlets—appears as the cover story of the Oct. 8, 1984, issue of the liberal magazine, *The New Republic*. The story was read on the floor of the Senate a couple of weeks ago and began opening a number of Democratic eyes on Capitol Hill.

Leiken has made six trips to Nicaragua. He has testified before congressional committees against any further aid to the so-called Contras or counterrevolutionaries who are fighting the Marxist regime in Nicaragua. And now, after his latest trip to Nicaragua, Leiken admits that the Contras, referred to locally and admiringly as *Los Muchachos*—"the boys"—enjoy widespread support in the population and that the Sandinista regime, propped up by some 3,000 Cuban military and 6,000 Cuban civilian advisors, is widely despised.

You'd never guess any of that from reading our press. Leiken, a liberal academic, comes down very hard on the U.S. press corps covering Nicaragua. He says American journalists have been taken in, co-opted in effect, by a larger group, the so-called Marxist internationalists, a term which embraces all the foreign camp followers who express solidarity with the Sandinistas—from Bulgarian and Cuban journalists to idealistic leftists from North America and Western Europe.

Disaffected Sandinista intellectuals who poured their hearts out to Leiken in Nicaragua said they were afraid to meet with American reporters because they knew that they sympathized with the Sandinistas.

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None of this should come as any surprise to those of you who have heard me before discuss disinformation, whose most pernicious aspect is what I call "censorship by omission." Stories that are deliberately ignored, suppressed or buried on the inside pages because they might change perceptions in a way that the self-appointed opinion molders might disapprove of.

Leiken furnishes many examples of this practice in Nicaragua, but the same thing has been going on all over the world throughout my 38-year career in this profession. The word that the Nicaraguans employ most frequently, according to Leiken, is *engano*, Spanish for "hoax" or "trick." Even the Sandinistas' much-vaunted literacy campaign about which you've read a lot in our media is a hoax, according to Leiken.

You've seen mass rallies in favor of the Sandinistas on your evening news programs. But what you were never told is that ration cards are confiscated if an individual fails to show up at these "spontaneous" demonstrations and that people are jailed for so much as criticizing visiting Sandinista officials or perhaps asking them embarrassing questions. "The most depressing aspect of our trip," Leiken concluded, "was to hear from so many people that their lives are far worse today than they ever were under the Somoza dictatorship."

If the media does not report inconvenient facts, how then is our Congress, whose perceptions are largely shaped by the media, supposed to make intelligent decisions? Which explains again, in my judgment, why Congress refused the \$21 million requested by the administration to fund the so-called Contras. A movement which Leiken, a Democrat, now regards as legitimate resistance against an oppressive Marxist regime, whose elite, he says, is living very "high on the hog," while the rest of the population has been cowed into silence.

The administration's 800-page White Paper on the thousands of documents that we captured in Grenada a year ago was released in Washington two weeks ago. *The Washington Post* reported this news at the bottom of page 30, with the headline "Selected Grenadian Material Released by State" guaranteed to make the average reader ignore the sto-

ry. Yet the very first document was a secret speech given by the late Prime Minister Maurice Bishop a year before the U.S.-led invasion in which he told his politburo colleagues that the objective was to impose a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship on the island while convincing the U.S. into believing that it was doing something quite different. Precisely the same disinformation techniques were used in Nicaragua in 1978, in Vietnam from 1956-75, in Cuba in 1958-59, and in many other parts of the world.

Possibly the most successful Soviet disinformation campaign in recent years was the effort to make millions of people on both sides of the Atlantic believe that we were on the brink of a global nuclear holocaust and then blaming that horrifying prospect on U.S. President Ronald Reagan. As the French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, a Socialist and a man I've known since Saigon in 1952, told me at dinner in New York recently the Soviets launched an unprecedented campaign of intimidation to prevent the deployment of Euromissiles, which were, as you all know, NATO's response to Moscow's deployment of the SS-20s beginning in 1977 and targeted principally against Western Europe.

If this campaign had succeeded, Cheysson said Moscow doubtless would have achieved its principal objectives: the decoupling of the NATO Alliance, the encouragement of neutralism in Europe and of isolationism in our own country. Fortunately, Moscow's strategic gambit was checkmated. As a consequence, Cheysson believes that the Western Alliance achieved its single greatest political victory since its inception 35 years ago.

The Soviet Union is faced with crumbling colonial outposts and the spreading phenomena of anti-communist national liberation fronts on Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nicaragua. Guinea became Africa's first Marxist state in 1958. It turned against Marxism with a vengeance when its first and only president, Sekou Toure, died last March after a quarter of a century of despotic rule.

Mozambique, an African Marxist state, has signed a non-aggression treaty with the hated enemy, South Africa, and has actually expelled 800 guerrillas to Zambia and Tanzania—all, incidentally, against Moscow's wishes.

**A**ngola, yet another Marxist state in Africa which is protected by 25,000 Cuban troops, is losing ground daily to the anti-communist resistance fighters led by Dr. Jonas Savimbi, and to this I can personally testify, having recently returned from a trip behind the lines in Angola.

Soviet client-states in the Third World are on the brink of economic disaster, and there is apparently nothing the Soviets can do about it except to send them more weapons. But I'm sure you would all agree with me that weapons is what Africa needs least.

To understand the magnitude of the Soviet failure and the phase I believe we are presently entering, I think one has to dial back to 1972. The year then-President Richard Nixon, with the assistance of Dr. Henry Kissinger, signed 29 bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union, including the SALT I treaty and the famous space rendezvous program.

The United States at that time was engaged in a damage-limitation operation. Nixon and Kissinger were still hoping somehow to head off final defeat in Vietnam by weaving the Soviet Union into a web of mutual interest with the United States. Somehow that would temper their Third World behavior and discourage the Kremlin from exploiting our defeat if one were to occur. This U.S. strategy did not work, because several administrations failed to grasp the real nature of Moscow's professed policy of peaceful coexistence.

Between January 1973, when the Paris Peace Accords on Vietnam were signed, and April 1975, when Saigon fell to the communists, our Congress cut military aid to South Vietnam by 76 percent. And during that same period, the Soviet Union doubled its military aid to North Vietnam.

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Never forget that despite all of their difficulties, the Soviets remain extraordinarily skillful at pursuing their objectives by all means short of open warfare—objectives that are more traditionally pursued at least in our Western minds by war itself. And here, of course, I am referring to state-sponsored terrorism, in many cases financed by drug rackets as explained in my latest book, *Monimbo*. I am referring to penetration, subversion and disinformation.

Two *kamikazes*, driving five-ton trucks loaded with explosives, triggered the unravelling of the entire Western position in Lebanon on Oct. 23, 1983, and literally changed the course of history. Libyan plots to mine the Red Sea, to bomb the Aswan High Dam—which would have wrecked the Egyptian economy—and to seize the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia—with hundreds of terrorists disguised as pilgrims—have all been uncovered in recent months, and Col Muammar Qadhafi is not the lone wolf operator that our media make him out to be. His intelligence service has been under East German management since 1974—a fact known to every Western intelligence service.

So, like a wounded predator, the Kremlin may be at its most dangerous as its many difficulties deepen. Weak or strong, the Soviet Union will remain locked in protracted conflict with the Western democracies.

The bottom line is that containment remains the only viable foreign policy. There are no shortcuts and no quick fixes. By way of conclusion, when affluence, freedom and peace are taken for granted, when instant gratification becomes a way of life, when well-intentioned people feel that nuclear freeze without verification equals a safer world, when people are no longer willing to fight and die to preserve their freedom and eternal principles of the American revolution, then totalitarian temptation cannot be far behind.