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Soviets train 600 terrorists a year, CIA director says

By Bill Gertz
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CIA Director William Casey yesterday accused the Soviet Union of operating "in unison" with international terrorists.

Mr. Casey accused the Soviet Union and its allies of allowing terrorist groups to maintain offices in Eastern Europe, to grant free passage to operatives traveling to commit terrorist acts and to import about 600 "young men" to Moscow each year from various parts of the world for indoctrination and terrorist and paramilitary training.

"A Soviet connection may seem shadowy to some, but it seems very close to me," Mr. Casey said in a speech to an international conference on terrorism here.

"Where are these training facilities located? They are heavily concentrated in the Soviet Union itself, in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, in South Yemen, Cuba and increasingly Nicaragua, and in the radical entente countries of Syria, Libya and Iran," Mr. Casey said.

A copy of Mr. Casey's prepared remarks to the conference, which was sponsored by SRI International, an international research institute, was obtained by The Washington Times.

Referring to the international terrorist network, Mr. Casey said that "I believe this network, if not a component of [it], still works in unison with what the Soviets have developed into the most powerful weapons system the world has ever seen."

The weapons system consists of nuclear missiles aimed at the United States and Europe and conventional military forces, he said, "but also of the weapons of aggressive subversion" that have succeeded in installing communist regimes from South Yemen to Nicaragua.

This subversion relies on a combination of active measures, political action and propaganda designed to influence and manipulate popular

opinion and political processes in the open societies of the world, he said.

Terrorists, Mr. Casey said, have "declared war on the mind" by trying to establish in the public consciousness a sense of the "terrorist's omnipotence and the public's helplessness." He urged the Western media to cover news of terrorist incidents in "a more reserved fashion" and called for "strong editorials" discrediting terrorist actions.

He outlined the CIA's strategy to combat terrorism through increasing intelligence collection

and foreign cooperation, strengthening legal measures to deal with terrorism and isolating terrorist states and gangs that sponsor terrorism."

Mr. Casey said that since the beginning of this year U.S. intelligence information has been responsible for thwarting about 80 terrorist incidents around the world. One example was a threatened hijacking of a foreign commercial airliner that was prevented by advance knowledge and effective police work, he said.

Other examples of foiled terrorist actions occurred in Europe, the Mid-

dle East, Africa and Latin America where American officials and businessmen were moved out of countries after being targeted for attack by terrorists, he said.

Regarding U.S. attempts to prosecute five Palestinians implicated in the hijacking of an Italian cruise ship, Mr. Casey criticized the governments of Egypt, Italy and Yugoslavia for "defaulting" on international extradition agreements with the United States.

But he praised Italy and El Salvador as two nations that have waged a successful war against terrorism.

During the late 1970s Italy had one of the highest numbers of ter-

rorist incidents, but since the early 1980s has been one of the countries of Europe least affected by terrorism, Mr. Casey said. He attributed

the drop to greater public support for Italy's security forces and excellent intelligence work.

El Salvador responded to increasing Marxist-backed terrorism, including an attack by a guerrilla group in San Salvador last June that killed four U.S. Marines, by intensifying military strikes against "these terrorists and other Marxist base camps" in the mountains, he said.

"The army's offensive has proved quite successful as a large number of insurgents — including some field commanders — were killed, communication lines were disrupted and supplies captured," Mr. Casey said. As a result of the raids, the Salvadorans rounded up 40 urban terrorists, including two men involved in the shooting last June, he said.



CIA Director William Casey