

~~SECRET~~

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

FILE

DATE 7-20-87 FILE  
DGC NO GI M 87-20122  
OIR 3  
P & PD 1

13 JUL 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

SUBJECT: The Continuing Soviet Disinformation Blitz (b)(3)

1. At the request of Fritz Ermarth at the NSC, we have prepared a brief report describing recent Soviet disinformation activities. It illustrates that Moscow continues to publicize a wide range of anti-US allegations despite glasnost and other reforms currently under way within the Soviet Union. (b)(3)

2. This memorandum was prepared by (b)(3) Foreign Subversion and Instability Center, Office of Global Issues. Your comments or questions are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center, (b)(3)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

Chief, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center  
Office of Global Issues  
Directorate of Intelligence

Attachment:

The Continuing Soviet Disinformation Blitz (b)(3)  
GI M 87-20122, July 1987, (b)(3)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

8 July 1987

The Continuing Soviet Disinformation Blitz

(b)(3)

Summary

Although Moscow claims to be reporting on its domestic problems with a new truthfulness, it continues to push a heavy agenda of anti-US disinformation at home and abroad. A major thrust of this effort--often comprised of crude, blatantly emotional appeals--has been to portray the United States as a practitioner of terrorism and subversion and a violator of human rights. Moscow also works hard at fostering opposition to US military bases and personnel overseas. The pace and scope of the USSR's disinformation activities--which have produced some benefits for Moscow--suggest that the Soviets will continue to take advantage of opportunities, particularly in the Third World.

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of Global Issues. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center, OGI, [redacted]

(b)(3)

GI M 87-20122

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]The Continuing Soviet Disinformation Blitz [REDACTED] (b)(3)

A Favorite Soviet Theme: US Destabilization of Foreign Countries. The Soviets have continued their campaign of many years that the United States is conspiring to destabilize foreign countries, particularly in the Third World, by sponsoring coups, assassinating political leaders, and conducting a variety of other subversive activities.

- o Shortly after the military coup in Fiji in May, Radio Moscow, TASS and Izvestia all began to play up rumors of US involvement. On 18 May, for example, Radio Moscow reported a statement by the Soviet-controlled World Peace Council--which cited a leftist British newspaper--that "former CIA Deputy Director" Walters was in Fiji when the plot was being planned and that US citizens participated in the event. Moscow stepped up its disinformation campaign on 1 June with a TASS story implicating the CIA and US Secret Service. This report was replayed the next day in Zimbabwe and on 3 June in Uruguay.
- o Since the February 1986 assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, Moscow has made a concerted effort to implicate the United States in his death. In addition to numerous Soviet and Bloc press accounts alleging US complicity in Palme's murder, Moscow produced a television docu-drama entitled "Why Did They Kill Olof Palme?" The film, shown this year in Sweden and the USSR, included accusations of CIA involvement in the shooting.
- o The USSR also uses forgeries, rumors, anonymous mailings and other methods to conduct its disinformation campaign alleging CIA plans to destabilize Third World governments.

[REDACTED] (b)(1)  
(b)(3)

[REDACTED] In addition, US Embassy [REDACTED] indicates that the KGB:

- Planted a rumor in the Congo this spring alleging that Zairian President Mobutu intended to use the CIA to assassinate Congo President Sassou-Nguesso.
- Circulated last year in India, Pakistan, Peru, Guyana and several African countries an unattributed pamphlet entitled "CIA Insider", which named alleged CIA agents and officers. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

GI M 87-20122

[REDACTED] (b)(3)

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

Human Rights Counteroffensive. Long sensitive to Western criticism of its human rights record, Moscow has recently intensified its efforts to denigrate the performance of the West on this issue.

- o The Soviets this year issued a series of charges--based on a book published by Novosti--claiming that the CIA instigated the 1978 Jonestown massacre in order to prevent cult members from emigrating to the Soviet Union. Since the allegation was first publicized in the 30 January edition of Izvestia, it has been replayed in the pro-Soviet Indian press and in the Communist press of Uruguay and East Germany. Moreover, the Novosti book has been reviewed in the Finnish and Danish press, thereby adding credibility to the story.
- o The publicity given in Soviet Bloc media and in Soviet disinformation outlets overseas, leads us to believe that Moscow is behind a recent campaign alleging US trafficking in Central American children for the purpose of using them in organ transplant operations. This campaign appears to have considerable momentum: Since the beginning of the year, these charges have appeared not only in Soviet, Cuban, Nicaraguan and Yugoslav media, but also in the press of the Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Honduras and India.
- o In an effort to exploit the apartheid issue, the USSR is continuing to push allegations--begun in the early 1980s--that the United States and South Africa are conducting research on a so-called ethnic weapon--a biological weapon designed to kill people selectively on the basis of race. Radio Moscow again charged in February, for example, that the ethnic bomb <sup>(b)(3)</sup> could kill blacks but "leave out the white race." [redacted]

Targeting the US Military. The Soviets also have an aggressive disinformation program targeting the US military presence overseas.

- o In our view, a central element of this effort is Moscow's worldwide campaign, begun in October 1985, charging that AIDS is the result of US biological warfare experiments. During the past several months the USSR has repeatedly used the AIDS story as a means of heightening opposition to US military bases, troops, and port access rights around the globe:

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

- In February, a Ukrainian paper claimed that the Japanese were panicking over the spread of AIDS by US servicemen in Japan and that restaurants, barber shops, and other businesses near US bases had barred Americans from entering.
- We suspect the Soviets were responsible for a forged press release surfaced in May in West Berlin in which a city health official purportedly announced that the US Army hospital there was overflowing with AIDS victims.
- o Moscow has also surfaced allegations that some existing US military facilities will be used in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program and that the United States is attempting to acquire new bases in order to destabilize particular regions:
  - In March the Indian press ran an article on Soviet charges--attempting to play upon regional sensitivity about military use of Diego Garcia--that the United States produced SDI components there.
  - Soviet radio charged in April that joint US-Zaire military maneuvers reflected a US interest in using the Kamina air force base (b)(3) southern Zaire to destabilize the region. [redacted]

In our view, several trends characterize recent Soviet disinformation activity.

- o **The Soviets are persistent.** In pushing a given theme, Soviet disinformation specialists apparently believe that repetition of even the most unbelievable stories pays off in the long run. Indeed, Soviet charges that AIDS was developed at Fort Detrick have been replayed in the press of over 60 countries. In April these allegations appeared in the official Indian armed forces journal "Sainik Samachar."
- o **The Soviets seize on opportunities quickly.** Within three days after the coup in Fiji, for example, Radio Moscow, Izvestia, and TASS all carried stories implying US involvement.
- o **Moscow targets much of its disinformation toward Third World audiences.** During the past year, we have seen a concerted Soviet effort--in part through forgeries and disinformation--to intensify anti-US sentiment within the Nonaligned Movement, whose criticism of the United States and backing of many Soviet positions Moscow believes is a major political asset. There is also evidence that the Soviets are working hard to exploit growing political and

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~SECRET~~

economic tensions in southern Africa, using forgeries as their primary vehicle. Through this mechanism, Moscow has alleged US coup plotting against several black African states; US-South African cooperation; and US circumvention of the arms embargo against South Africa.

- o **Soviet disinformation is often crude.** Despite glasnost at home and an increasingly sophisticated use of propaganda and public diplomacy, much Soviet disinformation continues to be comprised of crude, blatantly emotional appeals. As evidenced by the AIDS and baby trafficking campaigns, Moscow is apparently convinced that this approach can be effective, particularly in the Third World.
- o **The level of activity appears to be increasing.** While difficult to gauge, the level of Soviet disinformation activity appears to be on the rise, as evidenced by the number of known or suspected Soviet forgeries that have publicly surfaced in the past 18 months. Typically in the past we have seen about 10-15 of such forgeries each year, but for the 1986-87 period we are seeing a rate of about 20 per year.

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

Although the impact of Soviet disinformation cannot be measured precisely, we believe Moscow has reaped some benefits.

- o US officials have been forced to protest a barrage of anti-US AIDS disinformation stories throughout the Third World.
- o In India, where Moscow's most common theme alleges that the United States is conspiring to destabilize the country by supporting the Sikh and other separatist movements, Indians overwhelmingly believe that Washington is the single largest promoter of international terrorism, according to public opinion data from 1985.
- o According to press reporting, the ousted prime minister of Fiji said in a June interview in Washington that he had "strong suspicions" of US involvement in the coup and called for a Congressional inquiry.
- o Moscow's anti-CIA program--particularly the lists of alleged CIA officers and agents--has intimidated and cast suspicion on many people. For example, the US Embassy in Kinshasa reports that an editor of a Zairean newspaper who was a contact of USIS feared that the government's security service would interrogate him after his name appeared on a list of CIA agents.

(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (b)(3)

SUBJECT: The Continuing Disinformation Blitz (b)(3)

OGI/FSIC/AM (b)(3) (8 Jul 87)

Distribution:

- 1 - Dr. Kathleen Bailey, St (b)(3)
- 1 - SA/DDCI
- 1 - ExDir
- 1 - NIO/USSR-EE, 7E47
- 1 - Acting NIO/FDIA, 7E47
- 1 - DDO/PPS (b)(3)
- 1 - DDO/PPS
- 1 - SOVA/SIG/SPU,
- 1 - C/DDO/PPS, 3D01
- 1 - DDI
- 1 - ADDI
- 1 - DDI Registry
- 1 - DDI/PES
- 1 - CPAS/ISS
- 1 - D/OGI, DD/OGI
- 1 - OGI/PG/Ch
- 3 - OGI/EXS/PG
- 5 - CPAS/CB (7G07)
- 1 - C/FSIC/OGI
- 3 - C/FSIC/AM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (b)(3)