

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Remarks:

JRC
Executive Secretary
3/3/82
Date

3637 (11-81)

State Dept. review completed

**International
Communication
Agency**

United States of America

Washington, D. C. 20547

Approved For Release 2008/05/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002100120056-9

Office of the Director



82-22304

FEB 26 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
William J. Casey
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

FROM: Charles Z. Wick *CM*
Director

SUBJECT: "Soviet Propaganda Alert Number 4"

Enclosed is the fourth issue of "Soviet Propaganda Alert" produced by our Office of Research under the auspices of Project Truth's Executive Committee.

In January, the Soviets continued to accuse the U.S. of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, notably Poland, and of seeking military and geopolitical superiority. Specifically, Soviet propaganda:

- o Charged that the U.S. is interfering in Polish internal affairs by, among other things, provocative radio broadcasts (VOA and RFE), "inhumane" economic sanctions, "slanderous" declarations, and CIA plotting.
- o Derided and denounced the USICA television program Let Poland Be Poland.
- o Portrayed the U.S. as escalating the arms race and striving for military superiority and eventual world domination in a glossy publication, Whence the Threat to Peace.
- o Criticized the Reagan Administration for allegedly "reviving the Cold War" and conducting a campaign of "fabrications and slander" to discredit the USSR and socialism.

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Approved For Release 2008/05/14 : CIA-RDP83M00914R002100120056-9

PROJECT TRUTH

== Soviet Propaganda Alert ==

No. 4

February 17, 1982

Re: Project Truth

Summary

Soviet propaganda in January continued to accuse the U.S. of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, notably Poland, and of seeking military and geopolitical superiority.

o Poland. Soviet media charged that the U.S. is interfering in Polish internal affairs by, among other things, provocative radio broadcasts (VOA and RFE), "inhumane" economic sanctions, "slanderous" declarations, and CIA plotting. The television program Let Poland Be Poland was derided and denounced. According to the Soviets, the U.S. goal is to undermine "normalization" and subvert socialism in Poland.

o U.S. Strategic Policy. A glossy Soviet publication called Whence the Threat to Peace sought to counter the Pentagon's Soviet Military Power (which it imitated in appearance) by mustering "facts and figures" on U.S. military capabilities. The publication's theme is that the U.S., maintaining its tradition of an offensive strategic policy, is escalating the arms race and striving for military superiority and eventual world domination.

o The Reagan Administration. Assessing President Reagan's first year, Soviet commentators dwelt on the gloomy state of U.S.-Soviet relations. They criticized the Administration for allegedly "reviving the Cold War" and conducting a campaign of "fabrications and slander" to discredit the USSR and socialism. The "myth of the Soviet threat," they contended, has been used to justify Western aggressiveness worldwide and escalation of U.S. "preparations for war." President Reagan's handling of domestic economic problems, especially unemployment and the budget, also came in for criticism.

Soviet propaganda on other issues involving U.S. policy in various parts of the world included the following:

o "Wedge-driving" efforts to emphasize differences and conflicts between the U.S. and its West European allies, especially the FRG.

o Allegations of CIA links with the Italian Red Brigade terrorists and complicity in the kidnapping of U.S. NATO General Dozier.

o Other disinformation campaigns implicated the U.S. in the failed coup attempt in the Seychelles, and suggested that the U.S. is conspiring to overthrow the governments of Ghana and Nicaragua.

Office of Research
International Communication Agency

Washington, D.C.

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POLAND

Poland was one of the most important subjects in Soviet propaganda during January. Dominating Soviet treatment of the Polish situation were themes of alleged U.S. interference in Poland and condemnations of U.S. policy toward the martial law regime. The amount of actual reportage on internal developments in Poland was limited and had a rather pessimistic tone.

Much effort was devoted to refuting Western statements on Poland and denouncing Western actions. Soviet commentators drew heavily on Polish media and government pronouncements to support the Soviet line. By this they evidently sought to impart a sense of authenticity to the Soviet version of what is going on in Poland, and to project the impression that the Poles and Soviets share the same viewpoint.

On Poland, as on other subjects, the Soviet media made extensive use of Western (usually noncommunist) media items to buttress their claims.

Continuing U.S. Interference Alleged

The general Soviet line on U.S. conduct vis-a-vis Poland was the following: The U.S. is disappointed over the increasing stabilization and normalization inside Poland. Strife and chaos were required by the U.S. scenario for counterrevolution and the overthrow of socialism there. Now, not yet resigned to failure, the U.S. is continuing to mount various futile, last-gasp attempts to disrupt Polish affairs. These include economic sanctions, subversive radio broadcasts, projects such as "A Day of Solidarity with Poland," etc.

Some of the other major Soviet themes elaborating this basic line were:

o U.S. hypocrisy. The U.S. is hypocritical to condemn and enact sanctions against Poland on the pretext that the declaration of martial law entails human rights violations, while the U.S. maintains excellent relations with states that are truly oppressive and that violate human rights. (South Africa, Turkey, Chile, and El Salvador, among others, are commonly cited.) Some Soviet commentaries argue that the U.S. is unjustified in condemning martial law in Poland since martial law is recognized under American law as a legitimate measure to restore order under threatening circumstances, and it has been put into effect in parts of the U.S. on various occasions in recent decades. A further point made is that the U.S. is hypocritical to declare its desire to help the Poles while at the same time cutting off economic aid to them.

o CIA involvement. The CIA and U.S. Government in general have been deeply involved in supporting and inciting "Solidar-

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ity extremists" and other groups bent on civil war and the overthrow of socialism in Poland. Subversive broadcasts by RFE and RL (the "CIA mouthpieces"), VOA and other stations also try to provoke counterrevolution--for example, by broadcasting "instructions" to Polish "extremists."

o Anti-Polish slander. The U.S. and NATO are running an "anti-Polish campaign," slandering Poland and giving a false and outrageous version of developments in Poland. The Soviet Union and Soviet-Polish friendship are also targets of this campaign. The January 11 NATO ministers' statement on Poland is one of the most offensive products of this campaign in the Soviet view.

o U.S. pressure on allies. The U.S. is pressuring other countries, particularly its West European allies, to go along with American policy but is encountering considerable resistance. Soviet media reported and criticized Western European statements condemning martial law (January 5 EC statement, January 11 NATO statement) but Soviet commentary implied that the Western Europeans are "long on words, but short on deeds." In other words, regardless of what they say (perhaps as an effort to appease the U.S.), they are unlikely to take any measures--such as trade sanctions--which would seriously harm their economies or endanger the prospects for European security.

Soviet Media React to U.S. Sanctions

The Soviets denounced U.S. economic sanctions against Poland as inhumane actions which will affect the Poles adversely but not influence the course of events in the directions desired by the U.S.

As to measures taken against the USSR, Soviet commentators claimed these would not hurt the Soviet Union in the slightest. They contended that history has shown such actions are doomed to failure--and furthermore, they tend to backfire and harm the state enacting economic sanctions more than its intended target. Gloating over West European failure to follow the U.S. lead on sanctions, Soviet propagandists stressed that Western European countries are far more dependent on trade with the Soviet bloc than is the U.S., that they understand the importance of vital East-West economic links, and that they are unlikely to take the severely self-damaging step of cutting off these ties.

Soviets Blast "A Day of Solidarity with Poland"

The Soviet line on "Let Poland Be Poland" was established immediately after the President's January 20 announcement of the program:

o The program constituted interference in internal Polish affairs. Such interference is contrary to international agreements such as the CSCE Final Act and the UN Charter.

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- o The program was subversive in its intent, designed to incite the Polish people against the government. In the long run, it is part of a general plan to undermine socialism in Eastern Europe and to destroy the Warsaw Pact.
- o The program and other Solidarity Day activities underscore U.S. hypocrisy. No such "solidarity" has been shown for the victims of the massacre of Indonesian communists, the persecution of left-wing activists in Chile, or the subjects of repression in El Salvador and other countries. The hypocrisy is compounded by U.S. claims of wanting to help Poland while simultaneously cutting off food aid.
- o The U.S. is putting on the program not out of friendship for Poland, but because its imperialist and hegemonist plans for the country were frustrated. The program is only part of the large-scale anticommunist effort of the U.S.
- o The U.S. forced its West European allies to take part in the program. Many of these countries would prefer not to because of the damage it will do to peaceful coexistence, but the U.S. wants to regain its dominant position in the alliance.
- o The program was part of a massive U.S.-West European propaganda campaign. This campaign is unprecedented in scale and recalls 1950s Cold War activities.
- o Mr. Reagan supervised preparation of the program. USICA was responsible for producing it.
- o The program and U.S. propaganda plans are doomed to fail.

With minor variations on these basic themes, the Soviets attempted at once to diminish the impact of the program and to exploit it as an example of U.S. anticommunism. Predictably, initial reaction to the program was that it was a fiasco and had perhaps even damaged the U.S. position by showing how little support there was among the West European allies.

Adopting tones ranging from righteous indignation to sarcasm and heavy irony, Soviet media put out a barrage of articles and broadcasts. On the program itself, commentary tended to stress its "Hollywood" aspect and the low level of usage by even close U.S. allies. Some commentaries claimed to detect disagreement with the U.S. position in the statements of Messrs. Trudeau and Schmidt.

In what has become a propaganda pattern, the Soviets rushed out a program on Radio Moscow's English world service which was clearly a direct response to the planned U.S. show. Hosted by the well-known propagandist Vladimir Pozner and entitled "The Friends and Foes of Poland," the program was introduced as follows:

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This is not a show. Hollywood stars past and present are not involved in it, nor does it offer you such entertainment as heads of state sharing a rostrum with traitors. This is a documentary. It offers you the views of ordinary people and furnishes documented and verifiable facts. Those views and those facts will help you decide who are the friends and who are the foes of Poland.

Somewhat less temperate were the remarks of TASS news analyst Yuriy Kornilov:

What is of interest is that the "independence" of states and "noninterference" in the internal affairs of other states are being persistently invoked in Washington by those who not so long ago tried to "bomb back to the stone age" the revolutionary Vietnam, who have unleashed and continue their undeclared war against the sovereign Afghanistan, who try--wherever it is possible, be that in Chile or in El Salvador--overtly or covertly to strangle any attempt by the peoples to decide their own future. Appeals "to pray for freedom" are launched by those who encourage and aid the most reactionary, dictatorial, and hated régimes, who are arming the Israeli aggressor which in the eyes of the whole world is occupying the native Arab territories and wants to drown in blood the struggle of the Palestinian people for its own national existence.

Human rights are being invoked by those who created in their own country a state system of institutionalized arbitrariness, who shoot to kill the "disobedient" in Miami, send the national guards and police armed to the teeth to "pacify" the fighters against racism, and handcuff the leaders of the flight controllers' trade union which was brave enough to try to protect its basic rights. Truly there is no limit to Washington's dissemblance.

Pessimistic Reportage on Life in Poland

Soviet media coverage of actual developments in Poland was sparse, particularly early in the month. Most stories had a distinctly pessimistic character, pervaded with cautions that the internal situation is still "difficult," Polish attitudes are "extremely complicated," economic problems will not be easily solved, and other "threats to normalization" (CIA plotting, antisocialist extremists) still remain. Such stories were presumably designed both to prepare the Soviet people for a protracted period of troubles in--and because of--Poland, and to justify martial law as a means of coping with such a serious situation.

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The pessimistic tone of such Soviet features was somewhat tempered, if not offset, by optimistic notes. These were at least partly intended to reassure worried citizens of socialist bloc countries. Soviet commentators rarely failed to mention the constant progress in "normalization" of life in Poland under martial law. Uplifting stories about Polish servicemen steadfastly doing their duty--with many of them rushing to join the Party--and interviews with Polish workers relieved that "work rhythms" had returned to normal in their factory were intended to foster the impression that things are calm and, overall, are developing along positive lines (from the Soviet viewpoint).

Another common type of optimistic media feature focused on the "fraternal bonds" between Soviet Russia and socialist Poland. The 37th anniversary of the liberation of Warsaw by the Soviets was amply publicized. Polish gratitude for this was underscored, perhaps with the implication that Poles have lasting obligations to the Soviet Union which had better be honored. Some Soviet commentaries also seemed to suggest a parallel between Poland's rescue from fascism in 1945 and its more recent "rescue from counterrevolution." For Soviet audiences, it was no doubt reassuring to be told that Poles were now honoring Soviet war memorials rather than desecrating them.

Coverage of Polish Foreign Minister Czyrek's visit to Moscow also served to put Soviet-Polish relations in a positive light. The phrases chosen by the Soviets to characterize Czyrek's visit indicated that relations had considerably improved since the declaration of martial law.

PROPAGANDA PUBLICATION: Whence the Threat to Peace

Soviet propaganda booklets lauding the "peaceful nature" of socialist policy and condemning the "aggressive imperialist militarism" of the West are nothing new. The most recent pamphlet of this sort, however, titled Whence the Threat to Peace, gained unusually great attention. Published by the USSR Ministry of Defense in six languages and released in mid-January, the 78-page booklet was a reaffirmation of public Soviet strategic policy and, more specifically, the major Soviet rebuttal to the 1981 Department of Defense publication Soviet Military Power.

Whence the Threat to Peace was accorded an exceptionally large promotion in the Soviet domestic and foreign-targeted mass media. It was previewed, excerpted, and discussed by news commentators, and a rare Soviet military press conference was held. Interestingly, however, the print run was reportedly not large, and there were no reports--as of late January--of efforts to distribute it widely.

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Themes

The booklet's fundamental thesis is that U.S. strategic policy has traditionally been offensive, and the Reagan Administration is carrying on that tradition with a vengeance. The ultimate goal of the U.S., contend the publication's authors, is world domination achieved through development of military superiority (first-strike capability) over the Soviet Union.

Whence the Threat to Peace attacks Soviet Military Power for allegedly presenting a distorted and exaggerated picture of Soviet military strength (for example, by excluding comparative data on the U.S. and NATO). According to the Soviets, the "myth of the Soviet threat" has been concocted in order to "frighten" the public, and justify and mobilize support for a Western arms race for superiority.

To summarize briefly some of the other central points of the Soviet argument:

- o The U.S. bears the blame for obstructing arms negotiations, hindering peace and international cooperation, pressuring other countries, and trying to destabilize sensitive situations. It is driven by a desire to destroy socialism, which is growing in strength and thus becoming increasingly frightening to the capitalist world.
- o By mounting its noisy campaign against socialism, the U.S. is also striving to distract attention from domestic difficulties (deep social and economic problems). Furthermore, an active arms industry, fed by international tensions and antisocialist feeling at home, means huge profits for Western capitalist-imperialist circles.
- o The USSR is and has always been dedicated to peace. Its military establishment is for the purpose of defense. Soviet military developments have been responses to Western actions; the U.S. always initiates every new phase of the arms race.
- o The U.S. must accept the realities of the world situation and stop its confrontational foreign policy and futile drive for military and geopolitical superiority.
- o There is currently a rough parity between Soviet bloc and Western forces in Europe. U.S. and NATO military power is more than adequate for defense needs. Thus the present balanced situation should be acceptable to both sides.
- o The USSR favors arms control and reductions, but they must be carried out fairly. Providing the West considers the legitimate defense needs of the Soviet Union, agreements can be reached.

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Techniques

While "ideological" material is integrated into Whence the Threat to Peace, the authors rely mainly on a massive mustering of facts and figures (real and imaginary) to support their arguments. Adding to the persuasive appeal of this approach is the booklet's relatively sophisticated, smooth, "Western" style of presentation--which attempts to "mirror-image" that of its American-produced target, Soviet Military Power.

A favorite Soviet propaganda technique is liberal use of Western--especially reputable and noncommunist--sources to support the Soviet position on issues. Material is very carefully selected, of course, and often taken out of context or manipulated in a misleading fashion. This method is taken to an extreme in Whence the Threat to Peace, where a tremendous amount of data and analyses comes from Western newspapers, journals, and government documents. Most of the photographs are Western. The primary purpose is to establish credibility for the Soviet argument--the Americans' claims are "disproved" with their own data.

ASSESSMENTS OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST YEAR

Soviet media commentators provided an unrelentingly negative appraisal of President Reagan's first year on the anniversary of the Administration. As is their habit, they focused primarily on foreign policy and especially U.S.-Soviet relations, with secondary attention to U.S. domestic economic and social problems. There was much ado about the revival of a "Cold War mentality" in Washington--charges that the Reagan Administration is "fanning the flames of anti-Soviet hysteria" and "seeing the 'hand of Moscow'" wherever a problem for the U.S. exists. Lack of "realism" on the part of U.S. leaders was bemoaned, and there was no expression of hope for improved relations in the near term.

Soviet critics of the Reagan Administration tended to adopt a mocking, ironic tone when discussing Washington's current views on the Soviet Union, as if seeking to underscore the sheer absurdity--from the Soviet perspective--of such views.

One of the favorite themes of Soviet propagandists was the alleged "moral posturing and hypocrisy" of the Reagan Administration. They cited as a prime example of this the "harsh treatment" of striking American air traffic controllers as opposed to the "pious" stance taken on Polish Solidarity.

Regarding the U.S. domestic scene, Soviet commentators focused on economic ills. The emphasis was on unemployment--the num-

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bers of unemployed, their suffering, and the alleged indifference and callousness of U.S. Government leaders, who have "failed to take steps to remedy the situation." The Soviets inevitably contrasted unemployment in the West with the "guaranteed full employment" of the socialist-bloc countries.

President Reagan's State of the Union message to Congress was also used as a peg for criticism of the Administration's domestic economic policy. Soviet commentators stressed that the President "had to admit that the economic situation is very bad...it was impossible not to admit this." Noting that Reagan had promised to reduce the enormous U.S. budget deficit, they declared that he had "failed to produce results" and was now warning the American people not to expect speedy improvement. Nonetheless, "President Reagan expressed his determination to continue the present course of reducing appropriations for social needs combined with colossal military spending" (Moscow World Service [English], 27 Jan. [FBIS, 27 Jan.]). Soviet journalists asserted that in seeking to balance the budget by cutting funds for social programs without controlling military spending, the Reagan Administration was moving to "take away from the U.S. working people much of what they had achieved during long years of hard and stubborn struggle" (Moscow Television, Jan. 30, [FBIS, Feb. 1]).

WESTERN EUROPE

Major issues directly concerning Western Europe, the U.S., and the USSR are covered in the preceding sections on Poland and Whence the Threat to Peace. Other Soviet propaganda themes on Western Europe included:

o Continued "wedge-driving" between U.S. and Western Europe. The Soviet media continued to stress the differences between American and Western European geopolitical concerns, while at the same time emphasizing the unity of interests among all those sharing the European continent--including the Soviet Union. Among the Soviet allegations repeated again this month were U.S. indifference to European security concerns, failure to consult adequately with European allies before making decisions, and willingness to sacrifice Europe in a war if necessary for U.S. "victory."

o Alleged CIA link with Red Brigades. Charges of CIA-Red Brigades complicity, already made during the 1978 kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, were revived in connection with the kidnapping of U.S. NATO General Dozier. Referring to non-Soviet sources of information, the Soviet media reported that the Red Brigades, as other terrorist groups, are known to work with, and sometimes on instructions from, the CIA. The CIA would welcome a terrorist action such as the Dozier kidnapping, argued the Soviets, because it would hurt the image of the anti-NATO peace movement while creating sympathy for NATO at a time when opposition to it is strong and growing.

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE THIRD WORLD

Soviet propaganda output in January was routine as far as the Middle East, Latin America, southern Africa, and other regions are concerned. American policy in the Middle East came in for most attention.

Middle East

The U.S. was strongly criticized for vetoing the proposed U.N. declaration on sanctions against Israel. Trips by Secretaries Haig and Weinberger to the Middle East were characterized as U.S. "interference" in the internal affairs of sovereign nations and efforts to impose American imperialist will on that part of the world. U.S. support for "the Israeli aggressors" was blasted, and commentaries on this and related themes--for example, on the strength of "pro-Zionist" elements in influential U.S. circles--were designed to portray the U.S. as hostile to Arab interests in the Middle East and always on Israel's side.

In contrast to this picture of U.S. anti-Arab bias, the Soviet Union's sympathy and support for Arab peoples were emphasized. This, in addition to being explicitly stated, was conveyed in glowing reports on Arab delegations in Moscow, Soviet technical aid projects in Arab countries, friendly meetings of Arab and Soviet citizens, etc. Propaganda attacks against Israel, particularly in connection with the Golan annexation, also served to reinforce the image of the USSR as friend and ally of the Arab peoples.

Latin America

The harshest Soviet propaganda on Latin American issues was heard on Radio Peace and Progress (RPP) to Latin America. These broadcasts described alleged CIA operations in Nicaragua as "a conspiracy of large proportions...aimed at assassinating the Sandinist leaders and sabotaging the economy." A typical report concluded:

All this U.S. underground work in Nicaragua is part of the U.S. aggressive political strategy against this country. Washington is exerting direct pressure on the Nicaragua Government by telling it how the Nicaraguans should live and manage their internal affairs, whom they should or [should] not befriend. If they do not obey such dictates, Washington threatens an armed invasion, dragging along in its aggressive plans other states of the continent. [Present U.S. activity] is...the prelude of a collective intervention that is being prepared. (Moscow RPP in Spanish [to Latin America], Jan. 18 [FBIS Daily Report, Jan. 26])

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Commentaries similar in substance but generally less inflammatory in tone than the RPP broadcasts appeared elsewhere in the Soviet mass media.

Africa

Toward the end of January, the Soviet media began a disinformation effort on U.S. policy vis-a-vis Ghana. A familiar pattern of operation became evident: Soviet media, vaguely citing Ghanaian media sources, ran a story that Washington was involved in planning a coup in Ghana because of U.S. displeasure over the change of leadership there. One Soviet report, for example, charged that, because a "secret agreement" Washington had with the previous Ghanaian government was terminated by the fall of that government, the U.S. decided to provide "planes and mercenaries for an invasion" (Izvestia, Jan. 24). Citing Radio Accra as its information source, TASS reported that the U.S. hoped to destabilize Ghana "through economic boycott, slander, [and] ethnic strife." Once Soviet media gave worldwide circulation to such vaguely-sourced stories, they were picked up by communist and noncommunist news media outside the USSR. Frequency of repetition alone was relied upon to infuse them with a degree of credibility, at least for some audiences.

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Several prominent and numerous minor Soviet media items dealt with the subject of chemical-biological warfare (CBW). Much of the material appeared to draw upon recent publicity in the Western mass media of the issues surrounding the development and proposed production of binary weapons. Soviet sensitivity to Western charges of Soviet use of CBW in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan was evident in outraged Soviet denials of such activity and the intense campaign of countercharges, which show little sign of abating.

The Soviets raised standard accusations against the U.S.:

- o The U.S. is stalling bilateral CW (chemical warfare) talks because it is "on the way to preparations for large-scale chemical war."
- o Ample evidence, some available from Western sources (articles in The Washington Post and Armed Forces Journal are cited), shows that the U.S. has appropriated huge sums for CW development. The Reagan Administration, especially Secretary Haig, advocates binary munitions production and has "pressured" the Congress into earmarking funds for it. (As in other situations, the Soviets used--selectively--Western-sourced figures and other "facts" to enhance the credibility of their claims.)

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o The U.S. is trying to picture the Soviet Union as the aggressor in this area; it has used "slander and lies in order to justify its own dangerous course of increasing the arsenals of such weapons and to ascribe to others its own militarist plans."

A CASE STUDY: Continuing Soviet Campaign to Link the U.S. with Seychelles Coup Attempt

On November 25, 1981, an attempt to overthrow the government of the Seychelles failed. Michael Hoare, an individual with a long history of mercenary activity in Africa, led the group of armed men, most of whom returned in a hijacked airliner to South Africa from where they had mounted the attempt.

On December 1, President Rene of the Seychelles issued an official statement on the attempted coup, in which he noted that it was organized in South Africa but that the South African government disclaimed any responsibility. He accused two Seychellois exiles of involvement. No accusations were made against the U.S. or other Western governments, and the U.S. was implicitly thanked for its message of support to President Rene.

Notwithstanding their inability to produce any evidence of U.S. involvement in the event, the Soviets launched a campaign to lay the blame on the CIA. To outline briefly the key elements of their efforts to date:

o Immediately after the coup attempt failed, Moscow domestic radio reported unnamed African radio commentators as noting the "undoubted participation of Washington." The Soviets were unfazed when the official Seychelles account of the failed coup made no suggestion of U.S. involvement and clearly placed the blame elsewhere.

o During the first week of December, in TASS and in radio broadcasts to Africa, Moscow continued to blame the U.S. for conspiring with South Africa to "mastermind" and fund the attempted coup. TASS referred to nameless "news analysts" as the source of statements that CIA agents were involved.

o Subsequently, articles appeared in various African newspapers (Nairobi Nation, Lagos Daily Times, Ethiopian Herald, and others) speculating on U.S. involvement and repeating variations of the Soviet themes. In January, the Times of India picked up the story, stating that "it is widely believed [in southern Africa]" that the attempt "had the backing of several intelligence organizations of Western governments...."

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o A January 12 Izvestiia article on alleged CIA activity in Africa cited an article in the Paris journal Afrique-Asie as saying that the attempted coup was staged by the CIA in cooperation with the intelligence services of South Africa, Israel, and Morocco.

Typical characteristics of Soviet disinformation campaigns are evident in this case:

o The first appearance of the theme is in Soviet domestic media.

o False information is attributed to foreign sources (often vaguely identified) to give spurious authority to the fabrications. (Foreign sources cited by the Soviets in these situations may often be nonexistent.)

o Repetition is relied upon to establish the charges and endow them with an aura of credibility (at least for some audiences). There is often no attempt to establish even the appearance of a factual basis for the charges.

o The Soviets take advantage of the willingness of some non-communist media to accept undocumented accusations. Once these media carry the material, Moscow can replay it, treating it as if it were further confirmation of the original (Soviet) line.

Prepared by: PGM/R Staff