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MEMORANDUM FOR: DDCI

SUBJECT : Speech on Soviet Active Measures

Attached is [redacted] draft of your speech to be given later this month on Soviet Active Measures. The text has been reviewed in SOVA and has been approved and coordinated with the DO.

STAT

[redacted]
Chief, Foreign Activities Branch
Third World Activities Division
Office of Soviet Analysis

STAT

Date 16 May 1986

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SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES AND DISINFORMATION

Two years ago, on the eve of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, the national Olympics committees of 20 African and Asian countries received leaflets threatening violence if their athletes participated in the Games. The leaflets were signed "Ku Klux Klan." You probably remember that incident. And you'll remember that Attorney General William French Smith announced that the leaflets were forgeries by the Soviet political police, the KGB. They were part of a campaign by Moscow to justify its decision not to have Soviet athletes go to Los Angeles. They were also an effort to discourage others from going.

Those leaflets were examples of a wide-ranging, expensive Soviet effort to influence other countries. Putting out forgeries is one method of trying to get across a message without having the audience know who's sending the message. If you know that the Kremlin wants you to believe something, you'll probably have your guard up. You'll be a bit more skeptical than you might be if the message seems to come from some neutral or unidentified source. So the Soviets make extensive use of indirect, covert ways of trying to influence others. Moscow has a name for such secret methods: aktivnyye meropriyatiya. We translate it, "active

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measures," and we've picked up their term to identify a whole range of ways that the Soviets use to hide attempts to exert their influence, to build up support for Kremlin policies, and to attack our policies.

Those ways of Soviet active measures involve the spreading of disinformation--that is, information that deliberately gives only part of the story, that distorts the subject for a purpose. One of the techniques of active measures is Moscow's control of front organizations, like the World Peace Council. Such organizations use a public front of seeming neutrality and objectivity to attack Western attitudes but turn a blind eye to Soviet similarities--and to human rights violations and other Soviet deviations from world norms. Active measures also include several other things that I'll get to in a minute. But first, let me outline the broader Soviet information and propaganda framework into which active measures fit--the information and propaganda that is publicly attributed to the USSR, as distinct from active measures that are done secretly to conceal the Soviet role.

An essential element of the Soviet political system is the control of information. Since knowledge is power, the leaders of any Communist country seek to keep information restricted to those who need to know. Only that information which serves a proper purpose from the leadership's viewpoint is supposed to be circulated. This causes problems for trying to run a modern industrial country. You can't exercise tight control of all typewriters, photocopying machines and computer printers for fear of the

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wrong political ideas' being circulated and at the same time expect the right economic and technical ideas to spread to the places where they're needed for an efficient, productive economy. The worst recent example of the possible results is, of course, the slowness in getting out warnings on the nuclear accident at Chernobyl until after a lot of people had gotten doses of radiation--not only in the USSR but also in neighboring countries.

Except for cases like Chernobyl, the Soviets try to insure that only the right information gets out. The limited number of foreigners living in the Soviet Union have limited access to information. Ordinary Soviets are not supposed to talk to the diplomats, businessmen and journalists who live there. Tourists seldom have meaningful conversations with anyone besides those who are officially assigned to deal with them--and who are skilled at seeming to be candid while giving only a keyhole view of reality. Few dissidents are still able to voice the problems of the Soviet people.

The information that reaches the outside world is, therefore, shaped by the Soviets themselves to a large extent. The USSR spends perhaps 3 or 4 billion dollars a year on propaganda. That is the largest governmental information program in the world, by far. It includes TASS, which you hear quoted as being a news agency, except that it isn't like The Associated Press or United Press International, which go out and dig up news. TASS is a subdivision of the Soviet government. There's another Soviet press agency named Novosti that is in theory non-governmental. That doesn't make any difference, however, since Novosti's controlled from the same Communist

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Right now, however, the people in Moscow who think up disinformation and forgeries and peace front messages and such probably have their hands full. They're probably trying to find some way to get across the idea--without having it appear to originate in the USSR--that the accident at Chernobyl wasn't as bad as it seemed. We have already heard the public Soviet media denounce the Western press for exaggerating it--at a time when Moscow was not yet conceding that many people had been evacuated and a number had died. You can be pretty sure that various kinds of active measures are also being developed. Chernobyl is a stiff test for the Soviet system for trying to influence others through active measures that are supposed to keep Moscow's hand hidden.

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