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PROGRAM As It Happens STATION WAMU-FM  
NPR Network

DATE October 2, 1986 11:00 PM CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT Interview with Former CIA Agent <sup>RALPH</sup> Patrick McGeehee



ALAN MAITLAND: Remember those stories about American flights over Libya last August and reports of dissatisfaction inside the country, army troops ready to rebel, dissidents at the ready?

Well, it now appears it was all a part of an elaborate American plan to topple the regime of Colonel Muamar Quaddafi. Details of the destabilization plan were printed in today's Washington Post.

We've reached <sup>RALPH</sup> ~~Patrick~~ McGeehee, a former CIA agent and author of the book, Deadly Deceits, in Herndon, Virginia.

DENNIS TRUDEAU: Mr. McGeehy, who would be making these decisions? Who made the decision to plant phony stories in the American media about Mr. Quaddafi?

PATRICK MCGEEHY: Well, the senior officials, such as Reagan, President Reagan, Casey and -- Casey is the Director of the CIA -- and Secretary of State George Shultz probably were involved.

TRUDEAU: It was the top?

MCGEEHY: It was the very top. The decision was made at a Cabinet level meeting and it was -- well, President Reagan even commented after the meeting that -- he commented about how Quaddafi had a proclivity for ostentatious clothing and he said "why not invite Quaddafi to San Francisco since he likes to dress up so much?" and Shultz said, "why not give him AIDS?"

TRUDEAU: Mr. Shultz said that?

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McGEEHY: Yes, Secretary of State Shultz.

TRUDEAU: According to the Washington Post today?

McGEEHY: According to the Washington Post, right.

TRUDEAU: Now what kind of phony stories -- I presume they knew them to be phony -- were they planning to plant?

McGEEHY: Well, it was an elaborate deception program that involved a series of coordinated things, such as covert actions, diplomatic, military and public action, to convince Quaddafi that he was about to be attacked again by U.S. bombers, and also that he might be subject to an internal coup.

TRUDEAU: Was there any -- any grain of reality or truth in there at all? Were there forces inside Libya ready to have a coup?

McGEEHY: Well, the CIA for a year had been sponsoring groups inside of Libya, but they were disorganized and weren't ready to make the coup, and that element was not true at all.

TRUDEAU: Was there any truth to the rumor or the pretense that Mr. Quaddafi was on the verge of more terror, organizing or financing or sponsoring more terrorism?

McGEEHY: That was totally contrived. They had evidence that he was not doing anything.

TRUDEAU: Now, some of these stories were planted in American newspapers?

McGEEHY: Exactly.

TRUDEAU: How do they do that?

McGEEHY: Well, let me quote from the Senate committee that investigated the CIA.

The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred foreign individuals who attempt to influence opinions or the use of corporate propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers and other foreign media access. Then it goes on to talk about how the CIA has access to American journalists, a number of American journalists who are working for the CIA.

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And the Bernstein article -- David Bernstein wrote a major article on this. He said there are somewhere between 350 and 400 American journalists who are doing things for the CIA either under direct contract to the CIA, you know, placing articles in the media, or suppressing articles that the Agency didn't want in.

TRUDEAU: Is the CIA allowed to do this? I mean, you mentioned foreign, but we also here are dealing with stories that were planted in the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post, and presumably elsewhere. Is the CIA allowed to do this inside the United States?

McGEEHY: Yes, it is, unfortunately, and President Reagan in December of '81 gave the Agency authority to conduct "operations," unquote, in the United States.

TRUDEAU: Is it easy to do? I mean, this decision was taken --the decision was made, and the story appeared in the Wall Street Journal and the Post. Is it simply that easy? You just press the button?

McGEEHY: Oh, it's certainly that easy. The Administration spokesman -- I think in foreign affairs there are sources for about 80 percent of the news, according to a survey, and in my estimation that means about 80 percent of the news we get about international relations from our spokesmen is pretty much lies or propaganda.

TRUDEAU: On "As It Happens," we did interviews at that period --in late August -- about ship movements, about chances of more terrorism.

McGEEHY: Yes.

TRUDEAU: We were duped?

McGEEHY: It's so easy to do because when the President says something everybody picks up on it and -- and goes with the story.

There's a report on foreign editors and columnists that are recruited, newspapers and magazines are subsidized, press services are supported.

TRUDEAU: Is there any evidence, Mr. McGeehy, that this particular action worked? Is Mr. Quaddafi any weaker? He wasn't toppled, but was he shaking on his throne?

McGEEHY: There apparently was no evidence on all this. There is some indication that might have provoked him into the attack on the airline -- the Pan American Airline in Pakistan. There isn't any hard evidence on that, but there is some indication that it might have, you know, provoked him into taking that action.

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TRUDEAU: Have you done this, Mr. McGeehee?

McGEEHY: Have I been involved in misinformation operations?

TRUDEAU: Yes.

McGEEHY: Everybody who's involved in the Agency is involved in misinformation.

TRUDEAU: Does it work?

McGEEHY: Of course. The American people, I think, are the most naive in the world. They're so misled by American -- by Agency disinformation operations.

TRUDEAU: By their free press?

McGEEHY: By their free press. Apparently free press.

TRUDEAU: Now why should I believe the story that's in the Washington Post today just because they say they've got a leak of a memo from Mr. Poindexter, the National Security Advisor? Maybe this is disinformation.

McGEEHY: Well, that -- that's the big problem, what is true and what is not true, and that's the problem you get in when you maintain an Agency like the CIA that does nothing but deceive American and foreign public opinion.

TRUDEAU: Mr. McGeehy, why should I believe you?

McGEEHY: Well, I'm not asking you to believe me.

TRUDEAU: Maybe the CIA put you out there to write books and make them look powerful.

McGEEHY: Well, that's one feasible thought, but I ask you to look at the Senate Church Committee report that was published in 1976, and it talks about all of these things, and it's very well-documented to -- not only to the Church Committee but to CIA documents.

TRUDEAU: Fascinating stuff.

McGEEHY: It is indeed.

TRUDEAU: Thanks very much. Goodbye.

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McGEEHY: Bye.

MAITLAND: The former CIA Agent, Patrick McGeehy is author of Deadly Deceits. We reached him in Herdon, Virginia.