

*William J. Casey*

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## *Soviet Use of Active Measures*



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*Following is an address by William J. Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, before the Dallas Council on World Affairs, Dallas, Texas, September 18, 1985.*

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the Dallas World Affairs Council. We are all concerned about nuclear and conventional war, about subversion and insurgency around the world, about the undeclared war without borders which we call international terrorism. Today, I'd like to talk to you about another kind of war, which I will call the psychological war waged against the free world by the Soviet Union and its allies. The weapon in this war are documents, distortions, and forgeries. The battlefield is in the minds of people the world over.

In the intelligence community we borrow the Soviet term "active measures" to describe one of the weapons used in this struggle. The term itself—active measures—is descriptive of the aggressive character of these techniques. Most of these active measures are not new. Many of them were employed by Lenin and Stalin and by others throughout history. At no time in this century, however, have these techniques been used with more effect or sophistication than by the current Soviet state and its allies, notably Cuba and Nicaragua.

Campaigns of this kind strike at the very heart of Western governments, which rely on an informed electorate

engaging the true substance of the issues which confront our nation. Such campaigns are easily recognized and can be defeated, but the effort to do so has to be commensurate with the Soviet effort.

Right now we and our allies face a war of nerves, a propaganda campaign likely to assume unprecedented proportions as the Soviet leaders try to exploit our open societies to undercut our using our advanced technologies to defend ourselves against an ever more threatening Soviet missile force.

### **Active Measures**

**Political Influence Operations.** How do they do it? First, there is the "political influence operation," using respected individuals to spread the Soviet viewpoint through person-to-person contacts. For example, a respected Danish journalist worked as a clandestine agent of influence of the KGB for several years. A few years ago, he persuaded over 50 prominent Danish personalities to sign a newspaper advertisement supporting a Nordic nuclear-free zone. None of the signatories was aware of his connection to the KGB or of the source of funds for the newspaper ads he was sponsoring.

Often official and unofficial organizations in Soviet-bloc countries sponsor targeted individuals for all-expenses-paid

visits, where they can be wined and dined and provided with properly selected facts and figures. For example, 17 Costa Rican legislators recently spent a week in Cuba as guests of the Castro regime. Their visit was highlighted by a lengthy interview with Castro. Upon their return home, several members of the delegation made highly favorable comments to the press about Castro and his policies. These were immediately seized upon by Radio Havana to promote the Cuban position on Central America and to pressure Costa Rica to resume normal relations with Cuba. Trips like this also offer the KGB and its allied intelligence services opportunities to collect information on the visitors—information that can be used later to manipulate and even recruit them.

**Disinformation.** Another important Soviet weapon is disinformation. This technique involves planting half-truths, lies, and rumors to discredit free world policies or individuals. Some American diplomats who were particularly effective in countering Soviet policies in their host countries have found themselves the victims of smear campaigns planted by local Soviet agents. The purpose is to undermine the diplomat's reputation with the host government. Sometimes the target is the U.S. Government itself, such as the ongoing campaign in India to link the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] to the assassination of Indira Gandhi or recent allegations in the Nicaraguan press that the United States

planned to blow up its own Embassy in Managua in order to blame this act on the Sandinistas.

Disinformation efforts are projected and reinforced by media manipulation. The Soviets conduct a massive worldwide effort to manipulate foreign media, thus transforming portions of the press into an unwitting propaganda machine. For example, a newspaper in Latin America, which would not wittingly allow itself to be used as a propaganda organ, will reprint an article from an Indian paper accusing the United States of complicity in the death of Indira Gandhi. While the Indian paper is known locally to be Soviet connected, it is seen in Latin America as a respected element of a free press in a major Third World state.

Soviet media manipulation and disinformation benefit from the open character of the Western press. For example, in the case of the attack on the Korean Air Lines Flight 007, killing 269 innocent passengers and crew, the initial Soviet reaction was to deny that the civilian plane had been shot down. After a period of regrouping while world revulsion mounted, the Soviet Government used obscure Western publications to float the disinformation that the Korean airliner was on a U. S. spy mission. This remarkable story was noted by Western media along with the U. S. denial. Then Soviet-controlled media quoted the story, frequently out of context, sourcing it to respected American and West European newspapers. In this way the Soviet Union was able to generate the impression of broad international support for its version of the affair, thereby turning a "Soviet massacre" into a "spy plane incident,"

There are countless other examples of misuse of the world press by the U.S.S.R. and its allies. One of the first things General Jaruzelski did in Poland was to launch a smear campaign in the world press tying Solidarity to U.S. labor organizations, thus seeking to discredit Solidarity as an instrument of foreign intervention in Poland.

The Sandinista government in Nicaragua has practiced disinformation since it came to power in 1979. A steady stream of invective aimed at members of the resistance who served in the armed forces under the Somoza regime has been intended to hide the fact that the resistance has a popular base made up primarily of *campesinos* and large numbers of former Sandinista leaders

and fighters. Many of them were young men in school in 1979, were impressed into the Sandinista army, and deserted to the anti-Sandinistas the first chance they got.

Soviet press manipulation in the Third World is enhanced by its two press agencies, TASS and Novosti. While the former is openly identified as an official Soviet news agency, the latter is listed as an "independent" news organization. Yet, the Novosti headquarters in Moscow contains a section of 50 KGB officers who work full time on disinformation programs. Often the Soviets will offer their news services to Third World countries free of charge. This can result in the elimination of high-priced Western press services from these countries-particularly when the local government discovers that it can get the sort of local press coverage it wants from the Soviet services without complaints about censorship and freedom of the press. The result, of course, is a system wherein the U.S.S.R. can plant a false story with a Third World customer about American plots against black freedom in Africa, for example, and then cite that story to yet another Third World press client elsewhere in the world.

These Soviet news agencies are supplemented by those of the bloc countries. For example, Cuba's contribution is out of all proportion to its size or importance. *Prensa Latina* broadcasts over 2,500 news dispatches on two national and 12 international radio circuits daily. These dispatches are available in Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French from 36 branch offices throughout the world. *Radio Moscow* is thus strongly supplemented by *Radio Havana*. No government in Latin America can equal the broadcasting service of *Radio Havana*.

The Soviets also use books as a vehicle for disinformation. Annually, Soviet publishers print hundreds of titles in a variety of languages and distribute them abroad, usually without charge, in hundreds of thousands of copies per edition. Novosti released a book in 1985 titled *The Crime in St. Peter's Square*. Among its more interesting items is the following, and I quote:

There are certain similarities between the attempt on the Pope's life and the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963, in which, as is known, CIA men were involved (p. 20).

Yet another book released by Progress Publishers (Moscow) in 1983, *International Terrorism and the CIA*, levels the accusation that: ... "state ter-

rorism. has long become part of the foreign policy of U.S. imperialism..." (p. 14).

**Forgeries.** Forgeries, sometimes of the crudest form, are another widely used active measures technique. One recent example is a forged USIA [United States Information Agency] cable transmitting the text of a speech alleged to have been given by Jeane Kirkpatrick, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. This speech purports to outline U.S. Third World strategy, including support for independence movements in several Indian states and territorial claims by some of India's neighbors. This proven forgery has, nevertheless, assumed a life of its own and has surfaced again and again. In India it is used as "proof" of American intentions to "balkanize India" and was even cited as providing the motive for the alleged U.S. role in the Gandhi assassination. Where these forgeries pretend to be U.S. Government documents, their format usually follows that of the genuine document. The Soviets have obtained copies of U.S. documents from various sources, including the burned and looted Embassy in Islamabad.

The Soviet effort to boycott the 1984 Olympics featured a forged letter from the American Ku Klux Klan sent to the Olympic committees of several Asian and African countries threatening their athletes with racially inspired violence. You will recall that "fear of violence against their athletes" was the excuse the Soviet bloc used for not participating in the 1984 Olympics.

**Front Groups.** The Soviets employ a wide range of organizations as tools in their active measures program. Among these are so-called front organizations which are created and funded by the KGB. Today, the largest Soviet "front organizations" include the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the World Federation of Democratic Youth. These organizations establish local chapters which act to support Soviet disinformation and media penetration efforts. They also provide international forums to create the impression of broad international support for Soviet policies.

The effectiveness of the front groups grows out of their pretense not to share communist ideological goals as they attempt to attract members from a broad political spectrum. In fact, many of the rank and file members as well as much of the general public may not be aware of the Soviet influence on the

group. When a group such as the International Association of Democratic Lawyers comes forward with a public statement questioning the legality of prosecuting the Bulgarian on trial for complicity in the assassination attempt on the Pope, how many people are aware that they are a Soviet front group responding to direction from Moscow?

International friendship societies are also sometimes used by the U.S.S.R. to further its disinformation efforts. They sponsor trips to Soviet-bloc countries. They sponsor festivals and banquets at Western colleges and universities. In all of these activities they support the spread of Soviet disinformation, the surfacing of forgeries, and rumor campaigns. In recent years, we have noticed an increasing tendency of the Soviets to cooperate more closely with noncommunist political groups and religious and academic organizations in an effort to co-opt and influence their political activities.

The Cuban Institute for Friendship Among Peoples constitutes one of the most effective such organizations in the Soviet bloc. This outfit claims to have chartered 113 local Cuban friendship societies throughout the world. It also sponsors "work brigades" from Western Europe and the Americas. These groups comprise mostly young, idealistic college students who perform symbolic labor - cane cutting, construction work, etc. - in Cuba for a short time. While there, they are praised lavishly in the press for their ideals and heroism and feted and propagandized.

### **Organization and Specific Campaigns**

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the Soviet active measures program is its centralization and integration. There are three basic organizations responsible. Each of these organizations pursues its own programs-but these programs are carefully orchestrated and integrated into an overall campaign. The Soviet Communist Party's International Information Department is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of Soviet media campaigns. Another organ of the Communist Party, the International Department of the Communist Party, coordinates the activities of the various front groups and friendship societies, as well as the role of foreign communist parties. Finally, Service "A" of the KGB provides covert support to Soviet disinformation efforts. As I indicated earlier, the Novosti news agency headquarters in Moscow has a large KGB section. KGB officers often

work with, pose as, and co-opt journalists and academics in pursuit of Soviet disinformation goals.

All wars have individual campaigns, unique tactics, and strategic goals. Psychological war is no different. Some themes or campaigns are universal, such as the continuing campaigns to denigrate the United States, promote the concept of nuclear-free zones throughout the world (except in the Soviet bloc), and identify the United States with oppressive policies and governments in Africa, the Middle East, and Central America.

Many Soviet active measures programs are defensive in nature-that is, they are intended to protect the Soviet system. Thus, for example, the campaign to debunk the Bulgarian connection in the papal assassination attempt is intended to reduce the potential damage to Soviet and Bulgarian international images stemming from this event. A similar purpose motivated the Soviet campaign to accuse the United States of using Korean Air Lines Flight 007 as a cover for a spy plane. Likewise, most Sandinista disinformation programs have aimed at isolating the anti-Sandinista resistance from outside support.

On the other hand, some Soviet active measures campaigns are intended to accomplish specific foreign policy goals. For example, the Soviet Union has pursued various active measures to create an atmosphere around Rajiv Gandhi that will limit his political flexibility. This campaign has centered on arousing fears, distrust, and hatred toward the United States. Among the active measures in this campaign were a heavy press placement effort charging the United States with complicity in the assassination of Indira Gandhi and saying that the United States has long supported the Sikh separatists. At the same time that the United States was being denigrated through covert press placements, the Soviet press was emphasizing the wonderful state of relations between India and the U.S.S.R. and praising Rajiv Gandhi as a politically mature statesman, without reminding India that only a few years ago Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi were both branded as lackeys of imperialism by Soviet propaganda. In cases such as this, active measures often constitute only part of an integrated campaign, which also includes military aid programs, the expansion of economic relations, high-level political visits, etc.

The "neutron bomb" affair was the most successful Soviet disinformation

campaign in recent years. Designed as a reduced-blast, enhanced-radiation artillery projectile, the enhanced-radiation weapon, if deployed, would have rendered useless the overwhelming Soviet and bloc armored force superiority in any West European theater conflict. Once labeled by the Soviets as "neutron bomb" and "the ultimate capitalist weapon, that destroys people and leaves buildings intact," the political cost of this weapon became too high for the NATO allies to sustain. Building on this success in blocking the modernization of NATO forces, the Soviets next undertook to block any response to their own massive deployment of intermediate-range SS-20 multiple warhead missiles. In this, they have enjoyed only partial success. Nevertheless, many now believe that the SS-20 deployments were in reaction to NATO nuclear efforts when, in fact, as you know, the truth is exactly the opposite.

It is clear that for them it is a high priority to in some way stop or limit President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The Soviets have the only working ballistic missile defense in the world in the system built around Moscow, which is authorized under the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty. In addition to this, the Soviets have put themselves in a very strong position in missile defense. They have had thousands of engineers working on directed energy weapons and other defensive areas since before the ABM Treaty. In fact, a laser weapon program of the magnitude of the Soviet effort would cost roughly \$1 billion per year if carried out in the United States. In laser technologies, they are in a comparable or highly competitive position with the United States. In particle-beam and microwave technologies, they may have the edge in some important areas.

These Soviet efforts are under the leadership of some of their finest scientific minds. The most vocal Soviet scientists lobbying against the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative have themselves been heavily involved in Soviet research required for strategic missile defense.

The Soviets are also upgrading their antiballistic missile deployments at Moscow. This develops launchers, radars, and production lines-which could give the Soviets a running start to extend missile defense elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

The Soviets have, in violation of the ABM Treaty, built a radar in Siberia which, together with other large radar installations built for the authorized missile defense in Moscow and for other tracking purposes, will provide a much improved capability for ballistic missile

early warning attack assessment and accurate target tracking. These radars could provide the kind of support necessary for a nationwide ABM defense. The scientists who are telling the West that SDI will not work and is threatening to the peace continue to be engaged in research, testing, and deployment of missile defenses, some of which are authorized by the ABM Treaty, some of which go beyond it.

For the past 2 years, the U.S.S.R. has been developing one of its most intense active measures programs ever in reaction to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Their campaign has been aimed at frightening our NATO allies into believing that SDI means the withdrawal of the U.S. nuclear umbrella-ironic, given the fact that the nuclear umbrella protects Western Europe from Soviet nuclear blackmail. The anti-SDI campaign simultaneously seeks to encourage European and American antinuclear groups to view the SDI program as threatening an increase in the nuclear arms race, when, in fact, it promises the opposite.

The Soviet anti-SDI disinformation campaign has dramatically increased its tempo since the announcement of the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting set for this fall. The campaign has moved into the economic arena, raising fears of a "brain drain" from Europe if the United States begins to spend heavily on SDI research. Soviet disinformation efforts have reached into the United Nations, seeking to align Third World countries against SDI with arguments such as this program will initiate a space weapons

race — consuming resources and funds that would otherwise be devoted to feeding and developing Third World countries. Today, there are news stories and position papers purporting to show that the American SDI program threatens the peaceful use of space by Third World countries and endangers their communications capabilities by infringing on Third World broadcast frequencies.

It is essential that you, ladies and gentlemen, understand what this intensifying campaign is intended to accomplish. The purpose of the current Soviet active measures campaign is to limit President Reagan's political flexibility in dealing in bilateral discussions and arms control negotiations. Its tactical goals are designed to mobilize opposition to President Reagan's defense program-and particularly SDI-among our allies and in our country. This campaign attempts to bring the widest range of economic, moral, political, and international pressures to bear on the President in an effort to force him to restrict some or all of his SDI program. And this at a time when the Soviets are increasing their own strategic defense efforts.

It is important for you to understand that Soviet active measures campaigns will not soon end. They will shift focus, but we will continue to be confronted by a centrally coordinated, well-funded, and well-staffed overt and covert attempt to manipulate our perceptions and decisions.

### **The U.S. Defense**

Finally, what can we do about it? Our best defense against it is to tell the truth about the attempt to manipulate

us. If people really understand the Soviet use of active measures as a significant instrument of policy, they stand a good chance of not being manipulated. "The truth," as we have inscribed on our building at Langley, "shall make you free?," That is why, about 6 years ago, the U.S. Government began to release considerable information about Soviet active measures and why the Reagan Administration several years ago created an interagency group chaired by the State Department to provide people throughout the world with information on this aspect of Soviet behavior.

And that is what I am seeking to do today. Like President Reagan and all Americans, I hope that we will be able to negotiate meaningful, verifiable, balanced arms control and disarmament negotiations. I want to see a reduction of tension and the resolution of conflict wherever it exists.

But we have to keep on telling it like it is to the American public and to the people of the world if we are to preserve freedom in the institutions we all cherish. It is precisely in this that educational organizations such as yours make an outstanding and critical contribution to our nation and its security. ■

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