

**International
Communication
Agency**

United States of America

Washington, D. C. 20547

201

Office of the Director

056128

1140

PU

HU004



USICA

LOH

December 16, 1981

*Central file 20165
FG298*

12/16 R.F.?

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
James A. Baker III
Chief of Staff

FROM: Charles Z. Wick *X* *mw*
Director

SUBJECT: "Soviet Propaganda Alert II"

Enclosed is the second issue of "Soviet Propaganda Alert" produced by our Office of Research under the rubric of PROJECT TRUTH'S Executive Committee. This publication is part of ICA's PROJECT TRUTH information program to counter Soviet disinformation practices and spread the truth about U.S. policy and objectives. The "Alert" is sent to USICA posts around the world to provide background information for our staff.

PROJECT TRUTH

== Soviet Propaganda Alert ==

No. 2

November 27, 1981

Re: Project Truth

Summary

Overall themes and techniques of Soviet propaganda remain virtually unchanged from those reported in the first number of this series. However, specific incidents have triggered major Soviet efforts to take advantage of transitory themes which fit into ongoing propaganda patterns.

The theme of war and peace has been the main focus of Soviet media. In addition, many American officials and government agencies have come under frequent attack in recent Soviet propaganda.

Recent Soviet efforts are designed:

- o to picture President Reagan's disarmament proposals as a propaganda ploy.
- o to convince Europeans that the U.S. would, in the event of war, abandon them to the Soviet Union if by doing so the United States itself could avoid nuclear attack.
- o to turn public opinion in Europe and elsewhere against the NATO plan to modernize its theater nuclear forces (TNF) and thus to achieve Soviet aims at minimum cost.
- o to undermine the credibility of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy, and especially its recent offensive against Soviet active measures.
- o to divert attention from Soviet wrongdoing in Afghanistan and Poland.

End Summary

I. THEMES

A. The President's Speech on Arms Reduction Talks

Initial Soviet media response to President Reagan's November 19 speech criticized the U.S. "zero option" as unrealistic and unfair, an attempt to regain U.S. military superiority in Europe. Soviet media characterized the Reagan proposal as a "propaganda ruse" intended simultaneously to soften opposition--particularly in Western Europe--to U.S. and NATO military plans for Europe, and to block the upcoming Geneva negotiations, while trying to cast blame for the deadlock on the Soviets.

A flood of Soviet media commentary on the Reagan speech seemed primarily designed to blunt its positive impact upon worldwide audiences by discrediting it as a serious arms control initiative. Perhaps out of concern that Reagan might be upstaging Brezhnev on the eve of the latter's trip to Bonn, Soviet media commentators reemphasized the seriousness and steadfastness of Brezhnev's peace policy, contrasting that to alleged U.S. "posturing" and suspiciously "sudden" interest in peace.

Soviet media commentary stressed the following points:

- o "Rough parity" between the military power of both sides now exists in Europe. Figures cited by President Reagan to show alleged Soviet superiority are "fantastic." (Soviet media provided a counter set of figures.)
- o Acceptance of the American proposal would mean a return to the imbalance which formerly prevailed. The present Soviet defense potential in Europe would be eliminated while U.S. forward-based systems and British and French submarine-based missiles and nuclear bombers would remain untouched. Thus for this and other reasons, the "zero option" does not take Soviet security needs into account.
- o By deliberately offering a proposal they themselves realize is unacceptable, U.S. leaders are trying to create the impression "among the uninformed" that they are seriously interested in arms reduction in Europe. Actually, this maneuver is yet another indication that the U.S. is approaching the Geneva talks with an unconstructive attitude: the U.S. side would like to see a breakdown of the talks "that could be used as an excuse for the continuation of the arms race."

The Soviet media quoted extensively from Western media analyses to support their arguments. They also continued to give prominent play to material treated as evidence of a "warmongering attitude"

(over)

on the part of the U.S., such as information on U.S. military appropriations and recent statements by U.S. officials on "limited nuclear war" and "nuclear warning shots."

B. War and Peace

The recent focus of Soviet propaganda has been, overwhelmingly, war and peace. Soviet media have painted the U.S. as the enemy of peace, the instigator of a new arms race, an opponent of arms limitations talks, and a proponent of nuclear war.

While alleging America's "trigger-happy" attitude toward war and nuclear weapons, Soviet propaganda emphasizes the "peaceloving" nature of Soviet policies. The centerpiece of this campaign has been the so-called interview Leonid Brezhnev granted to the West German journal Der Spiegel in November. In this lengthy exposition, the CPSU General Secretary denies that his country seeks military superiority over the U.S. and disclaims any Soviet belief in the "winnability" of a nuclear war. Brezhnev insists that the USSR desires serious arms negotiations and that the U.S. is obstructing such talks.

Soviet media have given much play to the antiwar movements in Western Europe and pictured them as exclusively anti-American instead of antinuclear (i.e., against both U.S. and Soviet arms). This propaganda tries to turn the concern of many Europeans over nuclear conflict into a Soviet weapon to obtain the unilateral cessation of NATO's TNF modernization program while permitting continued Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles.

Because Soviet propagandists know that their own and other publics tend to discount official Soviet statements, they quote liberally from American and Western leaders--generally out of context or with distorted interpretation added--to bolster their points. Thus, statements by President Reagan on the possibility of a "limited nuclear war," by General Schweitzer on current Soviet designs, and by Secretary of State Haig on certain NATO contingency plans have all figured prominently in recent Soviet propaganda. (See also following section.)

In pushing the image of the U.S. as a warmonger and the greatest threat to world peace, the Soviet Union has made a number of claims and charges, such as:

- o the U.S. is plotting an invasion of Libya under the pretext of its Bright Star joint military exercises in the Mideast.
- o the U.S. plans to deploy neutron weapons in the People's Republic of China.
- o the U.S. plans to invade the Caribbean nation of Grenada.

- o the U.S. refuses to support the Soviet-backed U.N. treaty on weapons in space, an obvious sign of American intention to put "weapons of mass destruction" into space.
- o the U.S. is waging war against Cuba with chemical and bacteriological weapons and is training forces for an invasion of Cuba.
- o the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia presages a vast expansion of the U.S. military presence in the Middle East and indicates an American intention to use its military forces in areas where it claims (unjustifiably) a U.S. national interest.

Thus, for example, the Soviet military newspaper Red Star on October 18 claimed that "Washington regards the upcoming series of U.S. Armed Forces maneuvers . . . as a 'dress rehearsal' for an invasion of Libya and as a means of forcible pressure on other Arab countries." And a TASS broadcast on November 1 charged that

the United States is trying to secure for itself the long-awaited possibility to deploy its armed forces in the Middle East on a long-term basis, which fully meets the aspirations of U.S. imperialism to establish dominance over that strategically sensitive part of the world.

Soviet organs also continue to reiterate elements of the Soviet "peace offensive" first sketched at the 26th Party Congress in February-March 1981: e.g., the call for nuclear-free zones in Europe, and a new Mideast multinational peace conference to supplant the Camp David accords.

C. Vilification of U.S. Officials and Agencies

Soviet media have devoted much time and space to attacks on and citation of certain American officials. Among those most frequently and most sharply attacked in the past month have been: President Reagan, Vice President Bush, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, ICA Director Charles Wick, ACDA head Eugene Rostow, former NSC staffer General Robert Schweitzer, and two U.S. diplomats. Most often attacked has been Secretary Weinberger, with Secretary Haig a close second.

Two apparent motives lie behind these attacks. First, many of these officials have been on the offensive against the Soviet Union in recent weeks. Second, as noted above, Soviet propagandists think that quoting and misquoting Western officials lends more authority to their work.

The President's comment that he could, in certain circumstances, envision a nuclear engagement confined to Europe alone, has drawn much fire from Soviet media. In keeping with public Soviet mili-

(over)

tary doctrine, Brezhnev (in Der Spiegel) and Defense Minister Ustinov (at the November 7 anniversary celebration)--as well as many other Soviet commentators--have insisted that the USSR does not agree with the concept of "limited nuclear war." They claim that any nuclear exchange between NATO and Warsaw Pact members would inevitably lead to a major nuclear conflagration.

Such efforts seem geared to fan anti-American and anti-NATO feelings in Western Europe. Thus, Soviets apparently hope to spread doubt and disaffection among the NATO allies.

Notable examples of personal attacks are:

- o After publication of the Department of Defense report Soviet Military Power, Secretary Weinberger became a lightning rod for Soviet abuse, including many personal attacks. In a Pravda piece entitled "In a Propagandistic Hysteria" (October 1), a Soviet commentator implied that the Defense Secretary's "anti-Sovietism" amounted to a kind of mental imbalance. Noting that "anti-Soviet hallucinations" had brought former Defense Secretary James Forrestal to a "bad end" (suicide), he expressed fear that the present Pentagon chief might succumb to "the same illness." At bottom, this and other articles portray Weinberger and the U.S. as seeking military superiority over the USSR.
- o Secretary of State Haig has been the object of Soviet assault for a variety of public statements, e.g., that the U.S. would like to see a more moderate, pro-U.S. regime in Iran, that NATO might consider use of a nuclear weapon as a "demonstration," and that the U.S. intends to ensure its leadership in the Middle East with an American military presence in the region. Most of these remarks have been interpreted by Soviet commentators as evidence of American desire to dominate various areas of the globe and to interfere in the domestic affairs of other nations.
- o Statements of officials such as Bush, Rostow, and Lehman have all been used by Soviet propagandists to bolster their claims that the the U.S. pursues a policy of singleminded self-interest, primarily by military means, to the detriment of other countries. Soviet media portray U.S. policy as seeking American dominance over its allies, neighbors, and others--especially less developed countries.
- o Particularly intense have been Soviet-inspired attacks against two American diplomats, Ambassador Barnes to India and Ambassador Ortiz to Peru. Non-Soviet media with close ties to the USSR originally accused both men of being CIA agents. In a classic pattern, the Soviet media then picked up and spread the stories. Such unfounded charges are designed to embarrass American public servants and to complicate bilateral relations with the nations involved. But they endanger the lives of U.S. diplomats because alleged CIA agents often become "fair game" for terrorists worldwide.

Some individuals and agencies in the U.S. engaged in international information and cultural exchange activities have been prime targets for Soviet media attacks.

The International Communication Agency (ICA) has been depicted by Soviet media as a powerful and "far-flung" propaganda apparatus leading U.S. "anti-Soviet and antisocialist" propaganda operations.

ICA is charged with having close ties to the CIA; some Soviet commentaries, such as a November 5 TASS item, characterize ICA as "nothing more than a branch of the CIA." The Voice of America (VOA) is the ICA component most often singled out for attack, and the recently inaugurated "Project Truth" has also drawn specific criticism. Soviet media have accused ICA/VOA of, among other things, spreading fabrications which glorify the West and "blacken" socialism," and interfering in the internal affairs of other countries (most importantly, Poland) with the purpose of encouraging instability and subversion.

The Central Intelligence Agency itself has also come under regular fire from Soviet media, both for its alleged foreign involvements and for current attempts to change its mandate. Charges of CIA "crimes" against Panama's Torrijos, Cuba, etc. are noted below. But Soviet propaganda has been especially attentive to the proposed changes in laws which would enable the CIA to operate at home against enemies of the U.S. The Soviets accuse the Reagan administration of trying to turn the CIA into a domestic spying operation which would endanger the civil liberties of all Americans, particularly those who do not agree with administration policies.

D. The U.S. as Moral Monster Abroad and at Home

Soviet propagandists' ongoing efforts to portray the United States in the worst possible light can be seen in their charges of "amoral" and "immoral" U.S. activities, such as:

- o The U.S. constantly interferes in the internal affairs of other nations: in Poland, where the U.S. allegedly fans the flames of antisocialism in the Solidarity union; in Spain, where the U.S. is supposedly pressuring that nation to join NATO; in El Salvador, where--it is claimed--a legitimate national liberation movement is being blocked with U.S. support; and in Afghanistan, where the U.S. (and China) are accused of fomenting and abetting resistance to the Soviet puppet regime.
- o The United States uses military, political, and economic means to exploit Third World nations for the benefit of its multinational companies, monopoly capital, and the military-industrial complex.

(over)

- o The U.S. uses its leverage unfairly against its own allies-- forcing the Japanese to increase their military spending, the Europeans to acquiesce to U.S.-inspired NATO plans that only threaten war, and Egypt to submit to an expansion of the American military presence in the Mideast.
- o The United States in general and the CIA in particular have engaged in heinous crimes against individuals and nations. The U.S. was behind the death of Panama's General Torrijos, was somehow involved in the assassination of President Sadat of Egypt, and is currently using outlawed chemical and biological weapons against Cuba.
- o The Reagan administration's domestic economic program squeezes the poor and weak while helping the rich and powerful. The American worker is either ignored or consciously overburdened so that those in the so-called ruling elite may increase their own wealth. Most harmed by current policies are minority groups.

II. TECHNIQUES

Diversion of Attention from Soviet Wrongs

One of the most widely practiced Soviet propaganda techniques, diversion, has been frequently used in the past month. The most recent example occurred when a Soviet nuclear-equipped submarine ran aground in Swedish territorial waters. The incident, with the submarine obviously on an intelligence-gathering mission, garnered the Soviets much hostile publicity and considerable adverse reaction among European publics. Yet within a few days of the sub's release, Soviet media were again hyping the Soviet plan for a Nordic nuclear-free zone. And shortly thereafter TASS, the official Soviet press agency, accused the Swedes, albeit indirectly, of spying on Soviet communications systems for NATO.

They continue to utilize the diversionary technique to distract attention from their own huge military buildup, Soviet wrongdoing in Afghanistan and the Third World, and Soviet use of chemical and biological warfare (CBW). For example, as the United States began to demonstrate with hard evidence that the USSR uses and supplies lethal agents in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, the Soviet Union unleashed a massive attack on the U.S. for use of chemical weapons in Vietnam and of bacteriological warfare against Cuba (an allegation made by Fidel Castro).

As the Cancun summit was unfolding, the Soviet media tried to paper over the Soviet absence at the conference and the USSR's meager aid program to nonsocialist developing nations by vilifying the U.S. and the West as colonial exploiters of the Third World. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is almost ignored in

Soviet media, which blame instability there on Western interference. Continuing Soviet difficulties in subduing the indigenous Afghan resistance are blamed on the U.S. and China-- supposedly the instigators and direct supporters of the freedom fighters in Afghanistan.

When the Pentagon released its report on Soviet Military Power, the immediate Soviet response was to step up attacks on U.S. military power and the planned Reagan administration enhancement of American military capabilities. By falsifying efforts, they have tried to show that one photograph of a Soviet computer is not what it purports to be and by this device to call into question the entire text. (See Kornilov item in Izvestiia for October 20.)

In short, Soviet propaganda not only indulges in coverups and omissions, it often is reduced to name-calling. The theory behind this technique seems to be that Soviet policies, behavior, and even intentions are always irreproachable.

Prepared by: PGM/R staff