

1986

Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy

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Recommended Citation

Unsinger, Peter C. (1986) "Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 39 : No. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol39/iss1/16>

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ments, sound utilization, and approvable behavior are the norms. Such idealism which expects everything is perpetually disappointed by reality. It is profoundly unhistorical. Hence, it is an impossible standard for critical judgment, or reliable narrative.

In short, what is missing is deep sociological and institutional understanding of the fundamental interactions of our society and its intelligence operations. There are in fact many ways to this. For instance, Harry Howe Ransom has explained the wild swings between permissiveness and public accountability, between acceptability and denial, in terms of a dichotomy in American thinking between war and peace. When relations with the Soviet Union are hostile, secret intelligence operations are unleashed. When things appear calm, when we move into a peace compartment, the rein is pulled. On the question of what facts are available and relevant to commentators, until we have comprehensive institutional histories, we are left with tales of episodes and personalities. To make enlightened judgments about secret intelligence and its place in the American democracy we need better tools of information and insight than we are given here.

A favorite model of mine is Professor Harry Hinsley's official history of British intelligence in the Second World War. When the first volumes appeared, the English establishment gasped in dismay. It was a history without names. Men and women who had waited for decades for their wartime achievements to be

confirmed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office found their work described in terms of an organizational process. Brilliant exploits disappeared in a faceless bureaucratic record. Yet once the shock passed, Sir Hinsley's message was clear. In the story of the organization of intelligence it is the intelligence of the organization that is decisive. So well were matters ordered, so well was a great pool of talent channeled, that in the course of the war even should the quality of command diminish the quality of intelligence would improve. With this record, and helped by this perspective, serious analysis of British intelligence in the period begins.

Here, until the agencies give us more to go on, commentary on the American way of spying will remain fragmented and impressionistic. Public oversight and professional planning will lack the wisdom, and perspective, of what the French call "the long wave." And the intelligence communities themselves will have to accept the public impressions of incompetence that Volkman reflects. They will have to suffer (or even perhaps benefit) from periodic demands for change. Outside the curtain we will all remain, with Volkman, critics in the night.

GEORGE BAER
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Shultz, Richard H., and Godson, Roy. *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*. Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984. 211pp. \$19.95 paper \$12.95

It is not a new technique—it is found in Sun-tzu's *The Art of War* and Kautilya's *Artastra*. The suggestion is that one can confuse an opponent and split any alliance he may possess by planting "stories." The technique has been around for years and many would argue that it is the normal technique of statecraft. With the trend toward information societies, one can appreciate the role that states and interest groups play in forming opinions in target groups. However, when it involves falsehoods, half-truths, suggestions or manufactured evidence that will get the target, person, or group to believe in the veracity of the message and will consequently result in some form of action beneficial to those conducting the operation, we call that disinformation. It can be overt and/or covert, but in a democracy, it is considered unsportsmanlike behavior. The authors have examined the Soviet use of such "propaganda" techniques in the 1960-80 time frame to achieve their objectives.

The book has essentially four parts. The first deals with the broad topic of disinformation and is descriptive in nature. For anyone unfamiliar with the topic, the section will provide clear descriptions and several examples that illustrate what comes into play with this game. The Soviet apparatus is described, as is their methods to meet their foreign policy objectives through information and disinformation. The authors then examine how Moscow uses overt propaganda and front groups and this is followed with a section on the covert

operations of disinformation. Again, the examples are excellent. All this is then tied into the parry and thrust of their foreign policy and objectives, depending upon the stimuli from world events or American reactions. The next section is the authors' content analysis of the Soviets' work in the period 1960-1980 to achieve their ends, with the emphasis on the disinformation. Lastly, the reader is provided with some special insight into disinformation techniques by interviews conducted with some very experienced people.

Ladislav Bittman, a former member of the Czech intelligence establishment from 1954 until 1968, was actively involved in several active measure operations, or disinformation. His area of operations was Europe and he provides considerable insight into Soviet activities and their use of the eastern satellites. Another experienced person, but, with a different area and style of operation is Stanislav Levchenko. He operated from Tokyo and fronted as a newspaperman. His work dealt with politicians and members of the press. These interviews provide a good deal of insight into the "how its done." And if you are of the school that there exist many gullible souls and then can be easily had, these interviews will confirm it. But both men do their jobs so well that naiveté is not an excuse.

While propaganda is expected and does have its uses, it is usually identified as such and the receiver can act accordingly. The problem in a democracy is the public expects their

journalists to be objective and wise to manipulation. Totalitarian states simply trust no one and act accordingly. *Dezinformatsia* provides the reader with insight into how one uses lies, incomplete information or misleading information to weaken their adversary. Besides the general reader, this should be required reading for students in schools of journalism.

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Nacht, Michael. *The Age of Vulnerability: Threats to the Nuclear Stalemate*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985. 209pp. \$26.95 paper \$9.95

This broadly gauged evaluation of the dilemmas of nuclear armaments will be found useful by students and the lay public as an introduction to the subject and to basic terminology and concepts. Experts on the subject will find it somewhat disappointing because of its survey character and lack of depth on issues of current concern. It is, however, readable and lucid and does not suffer the common failing of making the subject sound more esoteric than it is.

The title is an apt description of Nacht's central preoccupations with the nation's vulnerability to nuclear weapons and the stalemate between the superpowers that arises from the mutuality of that vulnerability. He explores a series of threats to the stalemate—or to the stability of mutual deterrence—from which nuclear war could arise. He sees these

destabilizing factors as the insecurity of Soviet leaders, the new assertiveness of US strategic policy, the high accuracy and first-strike potential of new offensive weapons and of the warfighting doctrines that go along with them, the failure of arms control agreements to stabilize weapons competition, the increasing frictions between the United States and its allies, and the trends that indicate the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries is proceeding.

There is a deep ambivalence in this book that is never really resolved, on two counts. The first is with the vulnerability issue related to hard-target weapons. Nacht recognizes this as theoretically destabilizing and not something to be complacent about—or at least not something that political interplay in a democratic society will allow leaders to ignore. But he appears to disbelieve in the final analysis that leaders on either side could really decide to initiate nuclear war. There is so much second-strike power available that it would be suicidal for either to launch an attack. So the stalemate is really stable. But if so, why worry? Why rehearse the other destabilizing factors? One is left with the feeling that the stability problem is not so simple, and that Nacht feels that too.

The other point has to do with the disappointment over the results of arms control. The tension here is that Nacht is a believer in the classical virtues of arms control, but knows that the scorecard of actual agreements (he exempts the ABM Treaty from this shortcoming) has yielded