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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL

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August 16, 1984

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM: JOHN LENCZOWSKI

SUBJECT: Statement on Soviet Intervention in the U.S. Electoral Process

Per your request, attached at Tab I is the paper on Soviet intervention in the U.S. electoral process. Anything that you might need on this should ~~should~~ already be included in this paper. For purposes of a public statement, however, you may want to cross out selected paragraphs.

Attachment:

Tab I Statement

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Declassify on: OADR

DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997
By CAS NARA, Date 8/20/02

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Authority F06-114/10 #16965
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Soviet Intervention in the U.S. Electoral Process

The Administration is harboring a growing concern about Soviet attempts to intervene in the American election process and the effects this has on the international climate. We feel that the American people deserve to know the facts of this situation and the historical context in which they appear.

Recent Historical Context

There is a history of Soviet efforts to influence Western elections. Just last year, the world witnessed two of the most brazen attempts by the Soviets to affect the elections in Germany and Great Britain. These efforts included: Soviet support for "peace" and unilateral disarmament movements; the focusing of the considerable Soviet propaganda and disinformation apparatus toward the target countries; the issuing of a variety of threats -- especially of nuclear cataclysm -- should the wrong party be elected to office; and other methods. This intervention was not the figment of anyone's imagination. There has been broad consensus among scholars, experts and the electoral participants themselves that the Soviets in fact were engaging in the internal affairs of these states.

Soviet Consciousness of the U.S. Electoral Process

Today, we are witnessing a similar pattern of Soviet activities. These proceed from an unambiguous Soviet concern with the American electoral process. This concern manifests itself constantly in official statements by the Soviets, which portray various official acts by the President and the Administration as electioneering. For example:

-- Various Administration efforts, many of several years' standing, to conduct a business-like dialogue with the Soviets have been branded by them as "peace-making cosmetics" for domestic electoral purposes.

-- The President's trip to China and his participation in the D-Day ceremonies were scored as "electioneering."

-- The President's annual responsibility in delivering his State of the Union message was also branded as electioneering.

-- Soviet propaganda regularly cites U.S. public opinion polls that suit Soviet purposes and accuses the President of conducting policies designed to ameliorate temporarily his standing in these polls for electoral reasons.

Soviet Intervention in the U.S. Electoral Process

The principal method by which the Soviets attempt to influence American voters is by campaigning against the candidate and the Party they don't like. Their current campaign is designed to

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portray the President as a threat to peace, to portray his policies as so unreasonable and aggressive that it is no longer possible to do business with him. Recognizing that there is widespread public support for East-West dialogue, they attribute the impasse to the President and try to engender the fear of war among the electorate.

The Soviets, using their disinformation and propaganda apparatus to which they devote billions of dollars worth every year, have focused on the American elections in a variety of ways:

-- They attempt to convince American voters that the Soviets have something genuine to fear from U.S. military forces such as our INF deployments, when in fact the Soviets know that our forces are exclusively for defensive and deterrent purposes.

-- They wildly exaggerate American involvement in Central America for the purpose of frightening Americans that we are in "another Vietnam."

-- They accuse the Administration of sending the Korean civilian airliner on an aggressive spy mission.

-- They accuse the President of using terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

-- They have charged the Administration with using Sakharov as a pawn in a CIA-sponsored subversive operation.

-- They have called bona fide arms reduction proposals by the Administration such as our chemical weapons ban mere "propaganda tricks."

-- In their effort to show how the President is a "warmonger" and man with whom it is impossible to do business, they have likened him to Hitler and called America a fascist state.

-- They have declared continuously that U.S.-Soviet relations are at their lowest and most dangerous levels in history.

-- They have accused the President of not being truly interested or serious about arms control, but rather that his genuine sentiments favor a perennial arms race.

-- They attribute the breakdown in the arms control negotiations to the President, when in fact it was they who walked out of the talks. (This propaganda is designed to distract public attention from the outrageous preconditions the Soviets maintain for resumption of these talks.)

-- They have attempted to demonstrate the President's alleged lack of willingness to negotiate by proposing talks on space weapons and anti-nuclear weapons. When the President showed immediate interest, it was the Soviets who backpedaled away from these talks -- again blaming the President.

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-- They have accused the U.S. of violating various arms control agreements. (Such charges were meant to distract public attention from the undisputed credibility of the President's report to Congress on Soviet noncompliance with arms agreements.)

-- They have charged the President with preparing America both militarily and psychologically for war. The Administration has been called the most bellicose and militaristic in U.S. history.

As part of their effort to show how U.S.-Soviet relations are the worst ever:

-- They barred Ambassador Hartman from delivering the traditional July 4 TV speech, accusing it of being part of the U.S. election effort.

-- They have committed various acts designed to provoke the Administration into an angry reaction -- such as beating and imprisoning U.S. citizens and officials in Leningrad, imprisoning and possibly drugging Sakharov and ignoring the President's human rights demarches.

-- They organized an international boycott of the Olympics largely for the purpose of showing that the low state of East-West relations and the attendant lack of security for athletes were the cause. The Soviets hoped here that the American public would blame the President for spoiling the Olympics.

-- They engineered an "active measures" campaign of forgeries of Ku Klux Klan threats to athletes of Third World nations in order to bolster their claims of lack of security in Los Angeles and to widen the boycott.

Taking a different tack, and siding with the President's political opposition, the Soviets have praised the foreign policy planks of the Democratic platform. Pravda, for example, declared that the Democrats "are right on target" in their policies. They have also quoted approvingly various statements by Democratic candidates that were critical of the President's policies.

The most disturbing feature of the Soviet attempts to meddle with U.S. public opinion in an election year is their systematic campaign of intimidation. This has manifested itself in many ways that are profoundly destabilizing to the international climate:

-- They have issued numerous threats of a variety of dire consequences if the President continues to conduct his foreign policies.

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-- These threats include the overall danger of nuclear war, the deployment of ever larger Soviet military forces, the prospect of a never-ending arms race, and the impossibility of every achieving arms control so long as President Reagan remains in office. (These threats are not only designed to influence U.S. voters, but also to induce U.S. Allies: a) to distance themselves from the U.S., b) to pressure the U.S. to make negotiating concessions, and c) to support the President's domestic political opposition.)

-- They have been conducting military exercises that are increasingly large and offensive in nature.

-- They have made a point of loud announcements of new missile and submarine deployments.

-- They have increased their military presence in the Gulf of Mexico as well as in East Asia near U.S. shipping lines of communication.

-- They have been brazenly developing new and macabre varieties of biological weapons in the face of public exposure of this activity and in spite of the fact that it is a violation of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Altogether, the Soviets devote a massive amount of resources to influence American voters over the heads of the government. Their activities not only constitute intervention into the internal affairs of our country, but have done a great deal to aggravate the international climate.

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