

Soviet Intelligence Role In Latin America Rises

By BENJAMIN WELLES

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 6—United States intelligence specialists are disturbed by what they regard as a steady increase in the number and quality of Soviet agents in Latin America.

These specialists say that the Soviet Union has reorganized and modernized its intelligence network in the Western Hemisphere in the last decade toward the goal of diminishing, and possibly replacing, United States influence.

To do this, the American specialists say, the Soviet Union is moving on a variety of fronts to capitalize on Latin-American discontent with protectionist United States trade policies and with what many Latin Americans believe to be Washington's neglect of their problems. A major part of the Soviet campaign, the specialists feel, is intelligence operations conducted by "a new breed" of agents.

"In 1960, about 85 per cent of the Russian intelligence agents in the hemisphere were over the age of 40," one United States intelligence specialist said recently. "Now most are under 40. Some have even studied as exchange students in Ivy League colleges." The specialist described a typical Soviet agent today as personable, gregarious, cosmopolitan and fluent in Spanish and often in English.

Even the tailoring has improved, the specialist said. Ten years ago, he explained, a Soviet agent was easily identified by his baggy pants, a style favored by Eastern Europe's tailors. Now the typical agent is reported to be, among his other attributes, well dressed.

American analysts believe that approximately two-thirds of all Russian agents in Latin America work for the K.G.B.,

and the rest for the G.R.U., Soviet Army intelligence. About half the Soviet personnel accredited to Latin countries are intelligence operatives, the analysts report, saying that the proportion fluctuates from a high of 85 per cent in Mexico to a low of 25 per cent in Uruguay.

Increase in Relations

The steady increase in intelligence personnel and activities throughout the hemisphere is said to parallel the steady expansion of Soviet diplomatic relations with Latin-American states. The Soviet Union, the analysts say, regards secret intelligence as an arm of foreign policy, along with traditional diplomacy, force, the threat of force and propaganda.

Before World War II, the Soviet Union had diplomatic ties with three Latin-American countries: Mexico, Uruguay and Colombia. Now Moscow has embassies in 11 Latin-American countries—Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador—is about to open an embassy in Costa Rica and is negotiating for an embassy in Guyana.

The growth of relations, specialists in Washington say, has been accompanied by a change in policy. "Soviet policy in Latin America began changing, after Khrushchev's fall in 1964, from hard-line to a soft, smiling approach," said one analyst. "The Russians had seen the bad Latin reaction to Castro's attempt to export revolution. They didn't quarrel with Castro; they just went their own way and Castro went his. Their tactics differ—but not their strategy."

A Goal of Persuasion

Soviet policy is said now to be aimed at convincing Latin Americans that its diplomatic personnel are personable, professional, responsible people—always correct, as one informant put it.

"The Soviet is taking advantage of every local situation to increase influence at the expense of the United States, but it's not blowing trumpets," he added.

On the clandestine side, the

Latin leftists to serve as Soviet advocates.

"The average Latin leader thinks he can handle the Russians in his country," one source said. "Sometimes this satisfies his vanity if he's inherently anti-United States, sometimes it pleases his leftist backers. Whatever the reasons, the Soviet Union is making political headway throughout Latin America."

Key Goal of Strategy

One primary aim of Soviet strategy is said to be to counter the long-standing collaboration of United States and Latin-American intelligence agencies. This collaboration began during World War II, increased with the start of the cold war in the late nineteen-forties and accelerated in the early nineteen-sixties when the Cuban Government of Premier Fidel Castro began exporting revolution.

The collaboration now appears to be threatened, informants say, as Soviet intelligence seeks to extend its influence—at high levels in Latin governments and in police and security services—as a step toward eliminating the United States' influence.

The number of Soviet male officials accredited to Latin countries is still relatively small, analysts say—in 1960 it was about 150, today it is about 300—but it is growing. It includes embassy personnel from ambassadors to chauffeurs as well as men in trade missions, press and cultural offices and commercial enterprises such as shipping lines.

Spy's Rule of Thumb

By the rule of thumb that about half a country's accredited personnel are intelligence operatives, this would indicate a Soviet intelligence force of 150 in the hemisphere. However, specialists say this number is effectively doubled by the presence of wives. Additionally, significant numbers of unmarried Soviet women who are attached to overseas missions as secretaries or code clerks are believed to perform other tasks, including espionage.

One of these women—Raisa Kiselnikova, a 30-year-old translator, defected from the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City last March after 18 months' duty. She reportedly told the Mexican authorities that eight of the nine officials of the Soviet trade mission were intelligence agents.

A Mosaic Is Assembled

The testimony of Soviet defectors and the use of surveil-

workings are said to be these:

¶Soviet intelligence activities are normally directed by a K.G.B. representative posted as an embassy official—a political or economic counselor, a trade or cultural aide—even as a chauffeur. Intelligence officers—of both the K.G.B. and the G.R.U.—have been identified while traveling in Latin America as diplomatic couriers or as correspondents of such Soviet press agencies as Tass and Novosti.

¶Intelligence personnel report directly to Moscow through their own codes and communications systems. They bypass the ambassador unless he belongs to the 125-member Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party.

¶Since the early nineteen fifties, Soviet intelligence operations in the Caribbean, in Central America and in the northern half of South America have been directed from Mexico City; those in the southern half of Latin America have been directed from Montevideo. The Soviet Embassy staff in Mexico City numbers 62 men, plus as many wives. At least 40 of the men are said to be intelligence officials. In Uruguay, the male embassy staff has 32 men, plus as many wives. Eight of the men are reportedly intelligence personnel.

Cuba the Over-all Base

The main base for all Soviet activities in the hemisphere is still Cuba, the experts here say. Approximately 400 intelligence officers are said to have been assigned to Cuba since 1961.

Between 1961 and 1969, the experts add, approximately 2,500 Latin Americans have been trained in Cuban schools for political subversion. About 10 per cent have been Communists but the overwhelming majority reportedly have been young men and women of leftist—but not necessarily Communist—ideology. Several hundred are believed to have gone on to Moscow for further training.

Cuban personnel, trained by the Soviet experts, have been assigned to teach and direct

subversion in other Latin coun-
tries, informants report.
"Che Guevara's failure to
start a rural guerrilla move-
ment in Bolivia and his death
there in 1967 delayed but didn't
really stop Castro's plans to ex-
port revolution," one analyst
here said.
"Castro pondered long and
hard about switching to urban
warfare techniques," he con-
tinued. "It wasn't until last
April, for instance, that he
finally announced that he
would back urban revolution-
aries in the kidnapping of for-
eign diplomats, assassination
and so forth—but only if they
proved effective."
Time and Place Vital
United States specialists be-
lieve that the Soviet Union will
quietly back both rural and
urban revolutionary movements
in Latin America, depending on
the time and place.
Soviet and Cuban influence
is reported by rising in Chile,
which has installed an elected
leftist Government headed by
Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens,
a Marxist.
In Dr. Allende's Cabinet, an-
alysts note, socialists—some of
whom are more extreme in
Chile than the Communists—
now hold such policy posts as
the Foreign Ministry, the In-
terior Ministry, with control of
the police, and the key position
of secretary general of the gov-
ernment. Chilean Communists,
by contrast, hold the patron-
age ministries of finance, labor
and social welfare, public
works, education and mines.
As further proof of Soviet
and Cuban influence, infor-
mants here note that the Chil-
ean "grupos móviles," tradi-
tional antisubversive and riot-
control units of the constabu-
lary have been replaced by
"committees for the defense of
the community," modeled on a
system installed throughout
Cuba at Soviet suggestion. The
committees will reportedly be
manned by Communist and So-
cialist party stalwarts.
Activities Elsewhere
Other aspects of Soviet in-
telligence activity in the hemi-
sphere are listed by American
sources here as follows:
Peru: Last February, when
the first Soviet mission was
accredited to the military gov-
ernment of President Juan Vel-
asco Alvarado, five of the first
nine Soviet Embassy officials
came directly from Havana.
The Soviet Union has three
military attaches in uniform in

Chile. Their relations with the
Peruvian Government are re-
portedly correct and cordial
and Soviet influence in Peru is
said to be growing.
Argentina: The Soviet Em-
bassy staff consists of 34 male
officers of whom about a third
are thought here to be intelli-
gence personnel. Col. Sergei
Sokolovski, the Soviet defense
attaché, is more publicly promi-
nent in embassy contacts with
the Argentine Government than
is Ambassador Yuri Volski, ac-
cording to sources here.
Brazil: Soviet intelligence ac-
tivities have been held to a
minimum, informants here say.
Most activity consists of mak-
ing contacts. The embassy staff
consists of 60 officers in Rio
de Janeiro, Brasilia and Sao
Paulo, with as many wives.
About half the men are identi-
fied here as intelligence per-
sonnel.
Uruguay: Although Monte-
video is reportedly a base for
Soviet operations, these have
not been increasing. No clear
links have been detected be-
tween Soviet intelligence agents
and the Tupamaro, the anti-
government terrorist organiza-
tion.
Few Arms Supplied
The Soviet Union is not
thought to be supplying appre-
ciable quantities of arms to
Latin America. Some arms—
mainly Czech—have recently
been detected being moved to
subversive groups in Uruguay,
Argentina and Chile, but not
in significant quantities.
While the Soviet Union's
clandestine activity is steadily
rising in the hemisphere, in-
formants say, its trade with
Latin America remains static.
For the last 10 years exports
and imports have remained
at approximately \$130-million
yearly, less than 2 per cent of
Latin America's world trade.
Significantly, the analysts re-
port, three-quarters of the trade
is concentrated in two countries
with strong, right-wing military
governments—Brazil and Ar-
gentina. The remaining quarter
is divided among all the other
hemisphere countries, where the
analysts, note, Moscow concen-
trates on buying commodities
such as coffee, whose sales—
and price—often balance the
budgets of such states as Ecua-
dor, Colombia and Costa Rica.