

Propaganda For Abroad That Came Back Home

Washington

One problem posed by the CIA's use of its media assets abroad, especially those published or broadcast in the English language, was that they were likely to be closely watched by correspondents from the U.S. not fluent in the local language, thereby becoming prime sources for potential "replay" in the United States.

Former agency officials have said that the English language assets were used with impunity under the CIA charter, on the ground that the intended propaganda targets were not American correspondents or tourists traveling abroad but English-speaking foreigners, a rationale that one former agency man said "always seemed absurd to me."

Within foreign countries, the agency did all it could to foster "replay." In Latin America, for example, the agency began an operation, known by the cryptonym KM FORGET, in which stories planted in one country were clipped and mailed to others for insertion by local media assets. Such efforts enhanced the likelihood that the stories would be seen by an American correspondent and transmitted back to the United States.

One of the CIA's most extensive propaganda campaigns of the past decade was the one it waged against Chilean President Salvador Allende, a Marxist, in the years before his election in 1970 and until his overthrow and death in 1973.

According to the report of the Senate intelligence committee, millions of dollars were spent by the CIA to produce a stream of anti-Allende stories, editorials and broadcasts

throughout Latin America.

A CIA propaganda assessment obtained by the committee, prepared shortly after Allende's election in September, 1970, reported a "continued replay of Chile theme materials" in a number of Latin-American capitals, with pickups by U.S. newspapers.

"Items also carried in New York Times, Washington Post," the summary went on. "Propaganda activities continue to generate good coverage of Chile developments along our theme guidance."

In interviews, a number of former CIA officers spoke about what they said were, to them, unmistakable attempts to propagandize the American public indirectly through "replay" from the foreign press.

Our agency official recalled the heavy propaganda campaign waged by the CIA during the Vietnam war, conducted along the lines that "whatever had happened in Vietnam had to be the enemy's fault."

A former CIA official recalled that at the time of the "incursion" by American forces into Cambodia in the spring of 1970, the Hong Kong station "got a cable from headquarters instructing us to have all our assets present this in as favorable a light as possible."

Most of the Chinese in the region, the man said, resented the American military presence in Southeast Asia and were only further inflamed by the favorable portrayal of the motives for the American invasion and its success. But he noted that the newspapers in which the slanted stories appeared were read by a number of influential American correspondents.

There have been many in-

stances over the years in which American news organizations were taken in by the CIA. One former agency official recalled, for example, a riot at a Soviet trade fair in the Far East that he said had been staged by the CIA.

The agency, the man said, later planted an article with a major American magazine that cited the "riot" as evidence of dissatisfaction with the Russians in that part of the world.

An instance in which the CIA passed information to an American journalist, according to an agency official, involved C. L. Sulzberger, the foreign affairs columnist of the New York Times.

The CIA official, who in the past has had access to relevant agency files, said that a column about the Soviet KGB under Sulzberger's name in the Times, that appeared on Sept. 13, 1967, was, "verbatim," a briefing paper that the CIA had prepared for Sulzberger on the subject.

Sulzberger has denied that he even "took a paper from the CIA and put my name on it and telephoned it to the New York Times."

An inquiry by the New York Times unearthed yet another occasion in which the CIA interfered with the newspaper's reporting. In 1954, Allen Dulles, then the chief of the CIA, told a Times executive that he did not believe that Sydney Gruson, the newspaper's correspondent in Mexico, was capable of reporting with objectivity on the impending revolution in Guatemala.

Dulles told the Times that his brother, John Foster Dulles, then Secretary of State, shared his concern, and he asked that the newspaper keep Gruson, whom the agency believed to

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have "liberal" leanings, away from the story.

It did not become known until several years after the overthrow of Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, the leftist Guatemala leader, that the CIA had played a central role in fostering revolution that led to his downfall. There is some evidence in agency files that the CIA feared that Gruson's reporting was edging toward a premature discovery of its role.

Not all of the CIA's propaganda efforts have been conducted through the news media. For example, some of the thousand or so books published by the CIA or on its behalf have contained propaganda ranging from tiny fiction to outright deception.

One such book, sources said, was "The Penkovsky Papers," published for what the Senate intelligence committee called "operational reasons" by the CIA through Doubleday & Co. in 1965. The book purports to be a journal kept by the Soviet double agent, Colonel Oleg Penovskiy, in the months before he was unmasked by his Soviet superiors, tried and executed.

Although the information in the book was largely authentic, sources said it had not been taken from Penkovskiy's journal — which did not exist — but was compiled from CIA records by Frank Gibney, then an employee of the Chicago Daily News, and Peter Deriabin, a KGB defector employed by the CIA.

"It was not a diary," said one CIA official, "and it was a major deception to that extent." Another former official acknowledges that the book had been "cosmetized," and a third added drily, "Spies don't keep diaries."

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