

Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference

by Fletcher Schoen and Christopher J. Lamb



Institute for National Strategic Studies

National Defense University

The Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) is National Defense University's (NDU's) dedicated research arm. INSS includes the Center for Strategic Research, Center for Complex Operations, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, and Conflict Records Research Center. The military and civilian analysts and staff who comprise INSS and its subcomponents execute their mission by conducting research and analysis, publishing, and participating in conferences, policy support, and outreach.

The mission of INSS is to conduct strategic studies for the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Unified Combatant Commands in support of the academic programs at NDU and to perform outreach to other U.S. Government agencies and the broader national security community.

Cover: Kathleen Bailey presents evidence of forgeries to the press corps.

Credit: *The Washington Times*

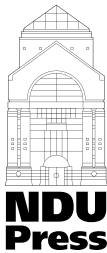
**Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic
Communications: How One Interagency Group
Made a Major Difference**

Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference

By Fletcher Schoen and Christopher J. Lamb

*Institute for National Strategic Studies
Strategic Perspectives, No. 11*

Series Editor: Nicholas Rostow



National Defense University Press
Washington, D.C.
June 2012

Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Defense Department or any other agency of the Federal Government. Cleared for public release; distribution unlimited.

Portions of this work may be quoted or reprinted without permission, provided that a standard source credit line is included. NDU Press would appreciate a courtesy copy of reprints or reviews.

First printing, June 2012

For current publications of the Institute for National Strategic Studies, please go to the National Defense University Web site at: www.ndu.edu/inss.

Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	3
Introduction	6
Active Measures and Small Interagency Group Performance	8
Devaluing the Counter-Disinformation Mission: 1959–1977	12
Rebounding to Take the Offensive: 1977–1981	20
The “Reagan Revolution” and Countering Soviet Disinformation: Early 1981	25
The Founding of the Group: 1981–1984	32
Momentum Carries the Working Group: 1984–1985	48
The Apogee of the Active Measures Working Group: 1986–1987	58
Analysis of Variables Explaining Performance of Active Measures Working Group	64
Atrophy and Decline: 1988–1992	93
Performance Assessment	97
Observations	107
Conclusion	115

Appendix: Working Group Products.....	121
Notes	125
About the Authors	155

Foreword

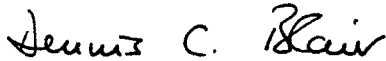
In this era of persistent conflict, U.S. national security depends on the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power being balanced and operationally integrated. A single instrument of power—that is, one of the country’s security departments and agencies acting alone—cannot efficiently and effectively deal with the Nation’s most important security challenges. None can be resolved without the well-integrated use of multiple instruments of power—a team bringing to bear the capacity and skills of multiple departments and agencies. The requirement for better interagency integration is not, as some have argued, a passing issue temporarily in vogue or one tied only to counterterrorism or foreign interventions in failed states. Interagency collaboration has become a persistent and pervasive trend in the national security system at all levels, from the strategic to the tactical, and will remain so in an ever more complex security environment.

Because of its resources, expertise, and pool of highly developed leaders, the Department of Defense (DOD) will have an outsized role in the future integration of elements of American power. This makes it vitally important that military leaders gain an understanding of interagency best practices. This study on the Active Measures Working Group provides a window into one little known but highly influential interagency group and its methods. Although the study examines just one case, it makes some intriguing arguments about how and why this interagency process managed to work well. Its historical and organizational insights are immediately relevant to many interagency efforts that the military finds itself involved in today. Along with pointing to best practices, this study disproves some conventional notions about the interagency process. Most notable of these is that small interagency groups need to be far away from Washington to work well.

The diverse cast of officials involved in the story of the Active Measures Working Group demonstrates that many leadership values the military respects are resident elsewhere in government. Two of the group’s leaders, Dr. Kathleen Bailey and Ambassador Dennis Kux, practiced what some have called “360-degree leadership.” They accepted responsibility, exercised initiative, and took in the views of their subordinates, peers, and superiors in a respectful and forthright way. Expertise and a mission-focused attitude were valued above rank. It is important for military leaders to recognize that organizations such as the Department of State have such dedicated leaders, both political appointees and career civilians, with whom they can partner to overcome the institutional and cultural gaps that so often hinder interagency collaboration and high-performing small teams.

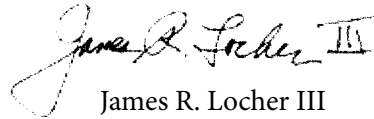
The study also reveals another telling lesson: DOD can support an interagency effort without having to lead it. Participants in the Active Measures Working Group commented on the resources and gravitas that military participation lent their successful effort. As readers will see, the presence of DOD representatives, civilian and military, encouraged and emboldened the group. The Active Measures Working Group experience illustrates the profound impact that military officers can have on an interagency effort without being in the lead and without providing a large amount of resources. It is supremely important that the coming generation of U.S. military leaders is educated on how to participate effectively in such interagency fora.

Finally, the strategic nature of the group's mission highlights the value of the case study. In an increasingly connected age, America will need to protect its public reputation from those who would malign it to weaken our national security. Safeguarding the country's reputation overseas is a whole-of-government endeavor requiring interagency coordination and collaboration. This study reveals how one small and remarkable interagency group made a major contribution in this area. Beyond its strategic and organizational relevance, this study is a historical behind-the-scenes look into a little known yet successful government effort to counter Soviet disinformation. It is a new and fascinating chapter in the history of the Cold War.



Dennis C. Blair

Former Director of National Intelligence



James R. Locher III

Former President and CEO

Project on National Security Reform

Executive Summary

This study explains how one part-time interagency committee established in the 1980s to counter Soviet disinformation effectively accomplished its mission. Interagency committees are commonly criticized as ineffective, but the Active Measures Working Group is a notable exception. The group successfully established and executed U.S. policy on responding to Soviet disinformation. It exposed some Soviet covert operations and raised the political cost of others by sensitizing foreign and domestic audiences to how they were being duped. The group's work encouraged allies and made the Soviet Union pay a price for disinformation that reverberated all the way to the top of the Soviet political apparatus. It became the U.S. Government's body of expertise on disinformation and was highly regarded in both Congress and the executive branch.

The working group also changed the way the United States and Soviet Union viewed disinformation. With constant prodding from the group, the majority position in the U.S. national security bureaucracy moved from believing that Soviet disinformation was inconsequential to believing it was deleterious to U.S. interests—and on occasion could mean the difference in which side prevailed in closely contested foreign policy issues. The working group pursued a sustained campaign to expose Soviet disinformation and helped convince Mikhail Gorbachev that such operations against the United States were counterproductive.

The working group was also efficient. It had a disproportionate impact that far exceeded the costs of manning the group, producing its reports, and disseminating its information overseas. The group exposed Soviet disinformation at little cost to the United States, but negated much of the effort mounted by the large Soviet bureaucracy that produced the multibillion-dollar Soviet disinformation effort. Over time, the working group's activities drove Soviet costs for disinformation production up even further and helped bankrupt the country.

The working group had its limitations, however, especially compared to the performance associated with the highest performing teams identified in organizational literature. Some members had trouble thinking of the group as a decisionmaking body instead of just an information-sharing enterprise. Concerning information-sharing, most parent organizations decided in advance what their representatives on the group could bring to the table. Most group products were drafted primarily by one organization's personnel. Most members did not support the team's mission at the expense of their parent organization's equities when the two could not be reconciled. Finally, group productivity fluctuated, and the existence of the group was tenuous. At one point, the Secretary of State unilaterally moved to quash the group's output, which led

Congress to intervene and reassign the mission to another organization. For these and other reasons, the group does not meet the standards that organizational experts typically associate with high performing “teams.”

Nevertheless, the Active Measures Working Group stands out compared to typical small interagency group performance. The group was subject matter-centered and incorporated a range of experts from all levels of government. The members shared information well, including classified information. Cooperative decisionmaking and activities were the norm during the group’s highest periods of productivity. The group resolved interpersonal conflicts productively. Overall, its level of cohesion and trust was remarkable considering the group met only periodically and its members were not collocated. The group also demonstrated unusual resiliency, persisting through numerous leadership and environmental changes, including the departure of many of its most ardent supporters following the Iran-Contra scandal. In short, the working group not only worked, which is noteworthy, but also worked well, which is extraordinary.

This case study—based on a careful review of government records, secondary literature, and original interviews with group participants and observers—makes several notable contributions. It reveals the Active Measures Working Group’s interesting and previously little-known role in the Cold War struggle. It explains, for example, why U.S. attempts to counter Soviet disinformation had virtually disappeared by the late 1970s even though the Soviet Union was redoubling its efforts to blackguard the United States, and what it took to reverse this situation. The study also contributes to a more complete understanding of small interagency group performance in two ways: It highlights why it is difficult and unusual for interagency groups to succeed in the current system, and it identifies the factors that best explain the working group’s success.

Senior leader support was a necessary prerequisite for the working group’s existence and thus its performance. Congressional leaders generated a requirement for working group reports, promoted them, and lobbied for institutionalized capability to produce the reports. Within the executive branch, the group had supporters at all levels. Without them, the group would have been greatly handicapped, ignored, or disbanded. Political support was limited, however, and did not guarantee success. Senior leaders did not define the group’s purpose explicitly, delegate special authorities, or provide dedicated resources. Other factors allowed the group to operate effectively.

The group wisely limited its mission to countering Soviet influence operations that could be exposed in a compelling way with unclassified or declassified information. Given the vague definition of Soviet active measures, the mission easily could have been construed so broadly

that completing it would have exceeded the group's political and substantive capacity. With the mission delineated in a practical way, the group could hold itself accountable for identifying disinformation problems, finding ways to resolve them, and producing actual results. It developed procedures and expertise necessary to complete the mission successfully. The group's modest definition of purpose and holistic approach to the mission allowed it to concentrate on cases that were likely "winners" and to do so with few resources, which made cooperation from parent organizations more likely.

Unfortunately, the group's success cannot be easily replicated for several reasons. Some interagency missions are so broad or nebulous that they cannot be construed in an end-to-end mission methodology that is results-oriented. In addition, the exceptional personnel that made the group a success are, by definition, hard to find. Moreover, the organizational milieu that the group operated in was atypical. The group was embedded in a lead agency—the Department of State—that was not supportive of the group's mission but nonetheless provided working group chairs and some supportive senior officials who were. When these leaders protected and led the group well, they earned the trust and cooperation of other agencies that saw them acting in the national interest rather than the Department of State's. This unusual condition helped the group coalesce and function at a high level.

The case study is valuable for several reasons. It demonstrates that even a typical small interagency group can be successful under the right conditions, suggests what those conditions might be, and explains why they are rare. The case yields hypotheses on successful small interagency group performance that can be used to guide further research and by practitioners. The case also reveals how little the current national security system does to ensure the success of small interagency groups. By demonstrating the exceptional value of one interagency group, the study foreshadows the enticing prospect of a better system that could routinely generate such high performance.

Finally, the case study yields insights on broader national security subjects. It summarizes the complex debate over American intelligence reform and explains its relation to strategic deception and strategic communications, particularly disinformation. It explains why national security leaders differ over the relative value of strategic communications, why the U.S. national security bureaucracy is often hostile to this discipline, and why America's current security circumstances demand robust strategic communication capabilities and a dedicated counter-disinformation effort. It argues that such capabilities need to be explained to the U.S. public, managed by dedicated interagency organizations, and integrated into a larger national strategy.

Introduction

In 1983, the *Patriot*, a pro-Soviet Indian paper that often published pieces provided by KGB (*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti*, or Committee for State Security) agents, released a story claiming that the U.S. military created the AIDS virus and released it as a weapon. For a couple of years, the story appeared in minor publications that were mostly KGB controlled or sympathetic to the Soviets. After this incubation period, the slander was picked up in 1985 by the official Soviet cultural weekly newspaper, the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. After that, the story began to spread rapidly. In 1987 alone, it appeared over 40 times in the Soviet-controlled press and was reprinted or rebroadcast in over 80 countries in 30 languages.¹ The AIDS virus was terrifying and not well understood at the time, so this piece of Soviet disinformation was especially damaging to the U.S. image.

Despite years of American protests, the Soviets remained unrepentant and insisted that their reporting was accurate. Then, on October 30, 1987, the Soviet Union promised to disavow the AIDS accusations against the United States. The turnaround in Soviet policy was precipitated by a heated exchange 3 days earlier between Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev. In the meeting, a “sour and aggressive” Gorbachev held up a well-marked and underlined Department of State publication called *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986–1987*.² Angry, the Soviet premier stated that the report contained “shocking revelations” and that it amounted to “nourishing hatred” for the Soviet Union.³ The report that angered Gorbachev was a detailed exposé of Soviet disinformation. Among other things, it laid bare the factual and scientific falsehoods in the Soviet campaign to attribute the origin of AIDS to the United States. Shultz countered Gorbachev’s complaint that the report went against the spirit of Glasnost with examples of hostile Soviet behavior and the remark that the lies the Soviets were spreading about AIDS were “bum dope.”⁴

While Shultz refused to apologize for the report, in reality he had not read it; neither had many others for that matter. Released 3 months earlier, the report seemed, in the words of the *New York Times*, “headed for the oblivion that describes the fate of most government reports.”⁵ Instead, Gorbachev’s rant drew the attention of the media to the report, which suddenly became a “must read” in the Nation’s capital. In a small, secluded conference room inside the Department of State where the members of a little-known interagency group that produced the report met, there was a brief moment of great satisfaction. Gorbachev’s reaction was taken as *prima facie* evidence that the group’s work was making a significant impact at the highest levels of the Soviet government.

The Active Measures Working Group, which spent almost a year producing the report, is a fascinating case of interagency collaboration that merits study. The working group is one of the better examples of effective interagency collaboration on record. Going up against a large, well-established, and well-funded global Soviet disinformation apparatus, the small band of U.S. Government personnel eventually forced the Soviet Union to disavow a number of its most egregious lies, agree to face-to-face meetings on disinformation, and establish an early warning fax system where either side could lodge instant complaints about such activities.⁶ As we show, the group's work also led influential foreign media to conclude that American accusations of an orchestrated Soviet disinformation campaign were justified. These were big successes for a small group that only met part time and with no budget. Studying the group to identify the factors that made it exceptional can improve understanding of interagency groups and our ability to establish similar groups capable of high performance.

Studying the Active Measures Working Group also is valuable for the insights it offers on strategic communications. Foreign countries still practice disinformation, including Iran and its proxy Hezbollah, which have developed sophisticated public diplomacy and disinformation programs based on active measures.⁷ Terrorists and other nongovernmental groups hostile to the United States also use disinformation. In addition, many of the Soviet lies have outlived the political system that produced them and to this day need to be dealt with.⁸ The counter-disinformation mission thus remains an important requirement for the U.S. national security system. Understanding how the Active Measures Working Group was organized and operated provides insight on how to organize current efforts.

The rest of this report is organized as follows. In the next section, we clarify the topic that we are studying since both the Soviet use of active measures and the interagency organizations countering them for the United States are open to misunderstanding. We also identify rough standards for assessing small interagency group performance and explain why these groups in general have a reputation for poor performance. We then present a condensed history of how the Active Measures Working Group was created and performed. Doing so explains the motivations of the key leaders who created, nurtured, and protected the working group, and establishes the group's actual output, providing an empirical basis for assessing its achievements. We then "enter the black box" and examine in detail what actually made the group function, using 10 performance variables extracted from organizational literature.⁹ We close with observations about the group's performance and the extent to which it might be replicated in the current U.S. national security system. We also offer some conclusions about the U.S. Government approach to strategic communications that we believe are well-illustrated by the working group's experience.

Active Measures and Small Interagency Group Performance

Our friends in Moscow call it 'dezinformatsiya.' Our enemies in America call it 'active measures,' and I, dear friends, call it 'my favorite pastime.'

—Col. Rolf Wagenbreth, Director of Department X, East German foreign intelligence¹⁰

The term *active measures* is a direct translation of the Russian *aktivnyye meropriatia*, which was a catchall expression used by the KGB for a variety of influence activities.¹¹ Non-Russian sources sometimes define active measures narrowly as covert Soviet techniques to influence the views and behaviors of the general public and key decisionmakers by creating a positive perception of the Soviets and a negative perception of opponents (that is, perception management).¹² KGB influence activities did include setting up and funding front groups, covert broadcasting, media manipulation, disinformation and forgeries, and buying agents of influence.¹³ However, this understanding of active measures is too narrow.

Soviet active measures went beyond overt and covert operations to manipulate perceptions and into the realms of incitement, assassination, and even terrorism.¹⁴ Soviet leaders made no major distinction between overt propaganda and covert action or between diplomacy and political violence.¹⁵ In practice, they all were tightly controlled by the Politburo and Secretariat of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,¹⁶ which approved the major themes of active measures operations.¹⁷ In this regard, the Soviets were no different than many previous regimes that have integrated the full range of active measures to further their interests,¹⁸ including their predecessors, the Czars (see textbox 1).

With this background, it is easy to see that the name of the Active Measures Working Group could be misleading. The group's activities did not address the full range of Soviet active measures. Instead, it focused on countering Soviet disinformation, although as we demonstrate, it sometimes publicized issues that went beyond disinformation when that would weaken the Soviet Union's ability to exercise influence through third parties. Another potential point of confusion arises from the fact that the Reagan administration set up a classified working group on Soviet active measures that operated out of the National Security Council (NSC) staff, and some who attended these meetings were also members of the group operating out of State. The classified group at the NSC used a wider range of methods and addressed a broader set of Soviet active measures than the group at State.¹⁹ To be clear, the subject of this research is the unclassified interagency working group led by the Department of State (and later the United States Information Agency [USIA]), not the classified NSC group that managed complementary but much more

Textbox 1. A Historic Example of Active Measures

Activities encompassed by the term active measures—for example, influence operations, covert subversion, information manipulation, and paid agents of influence—have been a staple of statecraft for centuries. For greater effect, they often are integrated with penetration of enemy groups by agents, provocateurs, and occasional acts of violence. For example, the czarist secret police (Okhrana) deployed the entire range of active measures to marginalize or defeat domestic dissident groups such as the nihilist People’s Will, which wanted to overthrow the Russian monarchy. Abroad, the Okhrana conducted surveillance and penetrations of émigré dissident organizations in France.¹ Sometimes, they were able to lure dissident leaders back to Russia where they were killed. Okhrana operatives also cultivated agents of influence in the European press to help manage perceptions of czarist Russia. French writer Marquis de Custine found this out when he published a highly critical travelogue entitled *Russia* in 1839. A known propagandist for the Russian government characterized the book as a “tissue of errors, inexactitudes, lies, calumnies, injuring in recompense for hospitality,” adding “Scratch a marquis [Custine], and the Jacobin shines through.”² The Okhrana successfully subverted every anti-czarist political movement in Europe except one: the Bolsheviks. They only managed to educate them. During their long underground struggle, Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks had firsthand experience with the Okhrana’s techniques.³ Later, the leader of the first Soviet secret police organization, Felix Dzerzhinsky, applied these lessons to opponents of communism.

¹ Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Secret Police: Muscovite, Imperial Russian, and Soviet Political Security Operations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971), 80.

² Astolphe Custine, *Custine’s Eternal Russia: A New Edition of Journey for Our Time* (Miami: Center for Advanced International Studies, 1976), 7.

³ Robert Conquest, “Ideology and Deception,” in *Soviet Strategic Deception*, ed. Brian D. Dailey and Patrick J. Parker, 124 (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987).

sensitive operations. Unless otherwise specified, all references to the Active Measures Working Group in this publication denote the Department of State’s unclassified interagency group.

To assess the performance of the Active Measures Working Group, a basis for comparison is helpful. Small interagency groups have been a prominent feature of the post–World War II national security system but not a particularly successful one. The success of any given interagency group must be judged in light of its intended output (see table 1). A low standard for

Table 1. National-level Interagency Group Effectiveness			
	Standards 		
	Low	Medium	High
Purpose	Deconfliction: <i>Agencies do not work at cross purposes.</i>	Coordination: <i>Agencies adjust behaviors in response to one another.</i>	Collaboration: <i>Agencies subordinate their equities to benefit larger mission.</i>
Requirements* <i>(for example, information-sharing and integrated decisionmaking)</i>	Some	Routine	Pervasive
Measures of effectiveness	Inputs: <i>Is sufficient information shared?</i>	Products and Events: <i>Are policies and strategies promulgated and milestone events taking place?</i>	Results: <i>Is progress toward mission success empirically evident?</i>
*These requirements are illustrative, as is the entire table. The group attributes required to fulfill the purpose of an interagency group are more extensive than information-sharing and common decisionmaking but vary depending on the purpose of the group and its operating circumstances.			

interagency group performance is information exchange sufficient to avoid having departments and agencies work at cross-purposes. Even judged by this simple purpose, interagency groups do not enjoy a good reputation for effectiveness. Many historical accounts of interagency group performance reveal that parent organizations carefully manage the information that their representatives share in order to protect their equities.

A higher standard is coordinating activities so that different agencies can work in concert. Many NSC staff-led interagency groups operate with this purpose in mind. They concentrate on generating policy guidance and managing national-level events (summits, negotiations, and so forth) so that all national security organizations have guidelines and milestones for cooperation. Here, too, interagency groups have a checkered performance record. Ever since the Eisenhower administration made interagency groups a prominent feature of that administration's NSC staffing system, they have been criticized for failing to produce clear, authoritative policy and strategy. A 1961 congressional report argued that the Eisenhower administration's 160 formal interdepartmental and interagency committees played a role that was "essentially critical and cautionary, not creative."²⁰ The heads of

departments and agencies rarely conceded authority for policy development or execution to interagency committees. Instead, they tried to avoid them, and when this was not possible, they participated only halfheartedly. Often the result was “lowest common denominator” agreements that did not bind members and their organizations to courses of action that went against their core interests.²¹ Some believe the 1961 congressional criticism of the Eisenhower administration was overly political, but 50 years later the concerns expressed in that report persist and remain widely acknowledged.²²

These same limitations were evident during the Reagan administration (when the Active Measures Working Group was operating)²³ and remain so today. Indeed, many of the people interviewed in the course of this research, who have extensive experience on interagency groups before and since their participation on the Active Measures Working Group, substantiate the view that most such groups are ineffective. One veteran of interagency groups stated that they do not work well because members believe information is power, and hoard it jealously.²⁴ Another person observed that interagency groups that she participated on (other than the Active Measures Working Group) were so ineffective that members “would send replacements or were there in body but not mind—just note taking.”²⁵ Yet another experienced interagency hand noted that “Usually [interagency] working groups have a light work load, not many meetings, and a lot of work done on paper.” They tend to be long-winded and “a pain in the neck.” When the principal members stop coming, the group realizes that its “work is not that important.”²⁶ Another person with vast interagency experience stated that at high levels—for example, the Deputies Committee composed of all the second-ranking members of national security departments and agencies—decisions get made but without the sustained attention they deserve: “I went to many [Deputies Committee] meetings and it was appalling that so many decisions were made at the last minute and with so little knowledge.”²⁷ For these reasons and others, most interagency groups are established to allow information-sharing or limited decisionmaking on broad policy positions. Few are expected to meet the highest standard of performance—a direct and discernible impact on the security environment through the management of actual programs, operations, and output.

In some situations, low levels of interagency cooperation are all that is required. For example, small interagency groups may perform well enough if one agency has a well-recognized lead for the mission and simply needs technical assistance from other agencies, or if an interagency group in the field already has a coordinated national position for its mission and just needs amplifying guidance. One member of the Active Measures Working Group observed that Washington interagency groups backstopping interagency negotiating teams in the field can work well in part

because “the operational requirements (and tempo) of providing day-to-day guidance to an inter-agency delegation meant that all agencies with [representatives] on the delegation had a common incentive to work out reasonably clear instructions.”²⁸ Others have argued that some interagency groups rise to higher levels of performance even when assigned more challenging missions. David Tucker argues, for example, in his authoritative study of counterterrorism policy, that one Reagan administration counterterrorism committee was able to cooperate effectively to make interagency policy. He observes that over time, the steady composition of the group, its shared experiences, and growing trust allowed the group to function well as a team.²⁹

The Active Measures Working Group is another example of an interagency success, but before examining the group’s performance in detail, we need to explain why it was created and why its mission ran counter to well-established practice. By 1975, the U.S. national security system was offering no meaningful resistance to Soviet disinformation. This posture had to be reversed before the Active Measures Working Group could be established. The short explanation of why and how that happened is that new leaders assumed office during the Reagan administration who believed Soviet disinformation and influence operations were real threats and that countering them required better counterintelligence and dedicated interagency efforts. A deeper explanation of the new leadership’s motives is essential, however, for explaining the origins of the working group and putting its achievements into perspective.

Devaluing the Counter-Disinformation Mission: 1959–1977

I suspect Angleton secretly still has an office out there at Langley.

—James Schlesinger, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, warning Admiral Stansfield Turner on old-guard CIA culture just prior to his taking the position in 1977³⁰

The inclination to challenge Soviet disinformation declined over the 1960s until, by 1975, there was no organized, overt effort to expose Soviet disinformation at all. Trends in strategic thinking, intelligence reform, and national security organization all reinforced the system’s predilection for avoiding the issue of Soviet disinformation. These three trends were mutually reinforcing, but to simplify, each is explained in turn.

The foundation for U.S. strategic thinking during the Cold War was the policy of containing rather than fighting the Soviet Union. The American and Soviet political and economic systems were ineluctably hostile to one another, but any direct fighting between the two nations might escalate into a nuclear exchange that would be ruinous to both. Containing the Soviet

Union thus required a delicate balance between cooperation and confrontation. American leaders wanted to confront and compete with the Soviet Union when doing so would moderate Soviet behavior and safeguard the American way of life, and they wanted to cooperate with the Soviet Union to lessen the chances of accidental conflicts that could spiral out of control. Getting the balance between cooperation and competition right was a subject of endless debate. Over the tumultuous late 1960s, the debate swung in favor of the view that more cooperation was desirable and possible, so the United States adopted a policy of *détente* with the Soviet Union. President Richard Nixon entered office in 1969 promising that “the era of confrontation in East-West relations has given way to an era of negotiations.”³¹

A principal architect of *détente*, Henry Kissinger, has argued that negotiating with the Soviets was a practical necessity given the political fallout from the Vietnam War, which included plummeting support for defense spending in Congress and disillusioned allies in Western Europe.³² In any case, *détente* and negotiations conferred legitimacy on the Soviet Union and indicated that the United States considered the regime a historical reality that could not be eliminated. Accordingly, during the 1970s, the United States signed a series of treaties with the Soviet Union designed to relieve tensions, regulate behaviors, and channel military competition along more stable paths. *Détente* also meant that less important areas—such as Soviet disinformation—could not be allowed to sidetrack progress on more important issues such as strategic arms control.

The second factor militating against a conscious effort to counter Soviet disinformation was the conclusion to the domestic debate over intelligence reform in 1975. During the 1960s as President Lyndon Johnson fought to retain domestic support for the Vietnam War, he became convinced that the antiwar and Black Power movements were controlled by foreign communists.³³ He ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to monitor American citizens in the United States to detect this foreign subversion. Called CHAOS, the operation compiled files on thousands of Americans.³⁴ Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms reported to President Johnson in November 1967 that the program had not uncovered evidence that antiwar activists were in contact with foreign embassies in the United States or abroad, but the program continued and was later expanded by President Nixon who expressed the same concern about foreign ties.³⁵ The CIA sometimes collaborated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which was concurrently running a program called COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program)³⁶ that was ostensibly created to counter subversion.³⁷ The program involved agents harassing and discrediting domestic groups as diverse as the antiwar movement, Communist Party USA, and Ku Klux Klan.

COINTELPRO was officially terminated in 1971, but was exposed in 1973 on the heels of the Watergate scandal, which also involved government agents (actually, former CIA officers).

CHAOS was closed down after Watergate prompted an internal study commissioned by the CIA director, who ordered employees to self-report possible violations of the Agency's charter. When the director's study was completed in May 1973, it came in at 693 single-spaced pages, each one of which described a possible violation.³⁸ In 1974, the *New York Times* revealed the report to the public and the story was confirmed by then CIA Director William Colby in December.³⁹ Congress and the public were outraged, and by early 1975, the White House faced eight separate congressional investigations and hearings on the CIA. The revelations about intelligence programs transgressing American civil liberties ushered in a period of intense public and congressional scrutiny. The scandals forced a reevaluation of the role of intelligence organizations in a free society. What emerged in the aftermath of the debate was a new American conception of intelligence that further inclined the national security system to ignore Soviet disinformation. This assertion requires a brief explanation.

William Colby assumed the position of CIA director in 1973 after President Nixon moved his predecessor, James Schlesinger, to the position of Secretary of Defense. Before assuming leadership of the CIA, Schlesinger had conducted a major study for President Nixon in 1971 on the need for reform in the Intelligence Community attributed to rising costs, advancing technology, and organizational inertia.⁴⁰ Colby supported the study's reform agenda, and the 1973 scandals gave him the opportunity to implement reform. By the time he was relieved from his position by President Gerald Ford in 1975, the CIA was a different organization. The debate over intelligence reform was intense, controversial, and complex, but it must be simplified and summarized here to explain its impact on the Agency's approach to Soviet disinformation.

Colby's reforms had the net effect of replacing what may be called a "traditionalist" view of intelligence with a "reformed" or uniquely American view, one that effectively downgraded the importance of disinformation and deception.⁴¹ First, Colby decided in favor of complete openness, revealing all the tawdry secrets of the CIA (sometimes referred to as "the Family Jewels"), ranging from failed assassination attempts of foreign leaders to spying on American citizens. Colby believed the CIA must be accountable to Congress not only as a Constitutional requirement, but also as a practical means of surviving the revelations about its past activities. Second, Colby oversaw a reprioritization of intelligence functions that reduced the emphasis on covert action, counterintelligence, and human intelligence sources in favor greater reliance on technical means of collecting information and better analysis.⁴² Past public support for covert action had evaporated, and "rightly or wrongly, a certain euphoria about détente signified to many that there was now [less need for] covert operations as a ready, effective weapon in our country's Cold War arsenal."⁴³ Third, in pushing for better analysis, Colby promoted emerging

social science methodologies because he thought they would improve the CIA's ability to support decisionmaking and would do so in a manner more consistent with a free society. He even believed that the Intelligence Community could become a "world class think tank," participating in a "free trade of intelligence," whereby nations recognize the "mutual benefit from the free flow and exchange of information, in the fashion that the strategic arms control agreements recognize that both sides can benefit from pledges against concealment and interference with the other's national technical means of verification (satellites etc.)."⁴⁴

Traditionalists believe that Colby's reforms were based on a fundamental misunderstanding. Reforms designed to make the American intelligence establishment more socially acceptable obscured the fundamental purpose of intelligence, which was driven by the need for secrecy:

*For the "traditional" view . . . the fact that an adversary is trying to keep vital information secret is the very essence of the matter; if an adversary were not trying to hide his intentions, there would be no need for complicated analyses of the situation in the first place. These different stances toward the importance of secrecy reflect basic differences with respect to what intelligence is. If, according to the "traditional" view, intelligence is part of the real struggle with human adversaries, we might say that in the new view, intelligence, like science in general, is a process of discovering truths about the world (or nature). . . . The paradigmatic intelligence problem is not so much ferreting out the adversary's secret intentions as it is of predicting his behavior through social science methodology. . . . The same tendency to say that counterintelligence occupies a marginal place in intelligence also affects the importance accorded to deception and counter-deception. By categorizing intelligence as akin to a social science endeavor, the new view ignores, or at least minimizes, the possibility of deception. Nature, while it may hide its secrets from scientific investigators, does not actively try to deceive them.*⁴⁵

Traditionalists argued that by downgrading covert action and making research and analysis the core function of intelligence, reformers made the CIA more acceptable but also less useful to the free society it served. The traditionalist and reformer views on intelligence were fundamentally at odds,⁴⁶ which helps explain why the implementation of the reforms was so bitterly divisive within the CIA, and why it required a massive turnover of staff to accomplish.⁴⁷

Here we are concerned not with the merits of Colby's reforms but with the way that the reforms inclined the U.S. national security system to diminish the importance of Soviet

disinformation. Colby's insistence on complete openness in confessing the CIA's transgressions reinforced the American penchant for believing that the truth always emerges. This belief encouraged the complacent notion that Soviet lies eventually impugned their reputation more than they damaged ours. The reformers' confidence that national technical means of collection and social science methodologies were not as susceptible to denial and deception techniques made these topics a lesser concern as well. Greater reliance on national technical means meant less dependence on human intelligence sources that could be manipulated and deceived more easily.⁴⁸ Thus, Colby felt justified in forcibly retiring the CIA's longstanding, eccentric, and "paranoid" master of counterintelligence, James Angleton (see textbox 2), and most of his staff as well.

These developments had the effect of reducing CIA attention to covert Soviet disinformation activities such as the use of forgeries and other propaganda tools to influence foreign audiences. They were resisted by intelligence traditionalists who believed that it was dangerous to think intelligence collection could ever be a cooperative endeavor that the Soviet Union would support in the mutual interest of reducing tensions and promoting arms control. They argued that the Soviets could, would, and did use deception—including double agents and technical operations—to fool U.S. national technical means of verifying arms control agreements, thereby passing disinformation to the U.S. Intelligence Community and ultimately deceiving U.S. leaders. Moreover, they saw covert action as an integral part of intelligence, including disinformation and attempts to counter disinformation. In their view, the reforms amounted to unilateral intelligence "disarmament." In the words of one intelligence traditionalist, the CIA's counterintelligence staff basically "lobotomized itself."⁴⁹ Some traditionalists retired or were forced out, but many of those who remained were determined to limit, counter, and reverse the impact of the reforms. Such individuals played a critical role in establishing the Active Measures Working Group.

The third interrelated and mutually reinforcing factor predisposing the national security system to ignore Soviet disinformation was organizational structure. After the CIA redefined Soviet deception from a strategic enterprise to influence U.S. policy by reducing the entire U.S. intelligence system to a more limited, ad hoc manipulation of U.S. media and decisionmakers for tactical gains, the topic assumed a less prominent position in bureaucratic structure and processes.⁵⁰ As a former deputy director of the CIA notes, the Agency was aware of Soviet deception activities but did not analyze them: "Surprising as it may seem—shocking, in fact—while the Directorate of Operations collected information on Soviet covert actions around the world . . . and their propaganda networks, these reports were regarded as 'operational'—not substantive—and were rarely shared with the analysts. . . . We tracked military and economic

Textbox 2. James Angleton, Counterintelligence, and Soviet Active Measures

The end of James Angleton's career marked a shift in the way U.S. intelligence agencies handled counterintelligence and responded to Soviet active measures. Angleton's career in intelligence began during World War II while working in the counterintelligence branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, which was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]). Angleton was one of the first Americans to suspect that the Soviets had penetrated and compromised anti-Soviet Russian émigré organizations in Europe before, during, and after World War II. Such suspicions were later confirmed when, among other things, the Soviets revealed that the *Wolność i Niezawisłość* (WiN, the Polish anti-communist resistance army) had been a fake. During the war, Angleton served in London as an OSS liaison to British intelligence, which performed a remarkable counterintelligence feat by successfully turning every known Axis spy in England and sending false information back to Germany. The British were less successful with Soviet spies, however. While in London, Angleton met the Soviet mole Kim Philby. Later, after a tour for the CIA in Italy, he met regularly with Philby in Washington, DC, where the British had assigned Philby in 1949 to liaise with the CIA. Philby, who escaped capture by defecting to Moscow in 1951, was instrumental in helping the Soviets tailor the WiN lies to fit American perceptions.

Angleton's experience with the British and Philby convinced him that the most effective strategic deception was only possible if the deceiver had reliable feedback from someone within the organization being deceived. He reasoned that the Soviets needed reliable feedback on the effects that their deception and active measures generated. In this regard, planting moles in a foreign intelligence service is analogous to what the military calls "bomb damage assessment." Without rapid and reliable bomb damage assessment, the military can waste resources bombing the wrong targets or the same targets over and over. Similarly, without inside sources to provide "deception damage assessments," the Soviet Union could misconstrue the effects that it was creating with deception efforts and overemphasize or reinforce the wrong themes. By extension, good U.S. counterintelligence that prevented Soviet penetrations would limit the effectiveness of Soviet active measures.

Angleton had a chance to act on his belief that penetration and deception were inextricably linked when he was appointed the head of the CIA's powerful and autonomous Counter Intelligence Staff in 1954. He thought the Soviets were using deception, disinformation, and other "active measures" to manipulate what the Western democracies believed

Textbox 2. James Angleton, Counterintelligence, and Soviet Active Measures (cont.)

about the Soviet Union, thus weakening the West's unity and resolve.¹ More specifically, he worried that the Soviet Union was using layers of secrecy in its own government, and moles in the U.S. Government, to manipulate CIA assessments of the Soviet Union and deceive the entire U.S. intelligence apparatus. During Angleton's tenure, the CIA categorized Soviet active measures, including forgeries and agents of influence, as part of this counterintelligence puzzle, so his counterintelligence staff had primary responsibility for dealing with them.² Over the next 20 years, he single-mindedly pursued the counterintelligence mission, enjoying close relationships with every director until William Colby in 1973.

Angleton's complex theories of deception, methods of investigation, and zealous hunt for a mole in the Soviet Division of the CIA—which terminated careers and disrupted intelligence collection—alienated many CIA colleagues.³ The backlash was so strong that after Colby had relieved Angleton, the Agency stopped training for or analyzing strategic deception. The Directorate of Operations prevented such activity, arguing that an excessive preoccupation with deception had proven counterproductive.⁴

During the Reagan administration, interest in the topic revived and senior leaders insisted on looking at Soviet strategic deception. They argued that Soviet active measures supported strategic deception and that both were underappreciated by the Intelligence Community. Thus, the debate over active measures and what to do about them was linked to the debate about strategic deception and U.S. counterintelligence. In the mid-1980s, the argument in favor of taking counterintelligence and strategic deception more seriously was buttressed by the discovery of Soviet moles in the Intelligence Community. It became clear that the Soviet Union had an abundance of insider perspective on how their deception and disinformation efforts were affecting perceptions within the U.S. Government. One such Soviet mole, Robert Hanssen, attended and even led the Active Measures Working Group for a short period.⁵

¹ A Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secret history of Richard Helms's term as director of the CIA declassified in 2007, as quoted in Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 275.

² Interviewee 18, a senior intelligence official, May 13, 2011. The CIA Directorate of Operations was also involved in the debriefing of defectors and other covert activities surrounding active measures. Agents picked up examples of forgeries in the field and reported them back to Washington.

Textbox 2. James Angleton, Counterintelligence, and Soviet Active Measures (cont.)

³ Angleton's theories on Soviet deception are dealt with in depth in Edward J. Epstein, *Deception: The Invisible War between the KGB and the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

⁴ Jim Bruce, senior political scientist for RAND Corporation and former CIA analyst, phone interview by authors, November 1, 2011.

⁵ David Major, interview by authors, May 5, 2011; Active Measures Working Group member who prefers anonymity, interview by authors, February 8, 2011.

assistance and Soviet diplomatic activities pretty thoroughly, but CIA analysts neglected the seamier side of Soviet activities around the world.”⁵¹

KGB deception activities were only tracked by a handful of CIA analysts who were isolated from broader attempts to characterize Soviet strategic intentions. The CIA did not consider them worthy of study and countermeasures, an attitude that new leaders in the Reagan administration would attempt to correct later through reorganization. Similarly, the FBI, Department of State, and Department of Defense (DOD) had only a few low-level disinformation experts on staff by the late 1970s, and their views were not influential.

Over the same period that dominant U.S. strategic thinking, intelligence reform, and organizational priorities and structure were disposing the U.S. national security bureaucracy to ignore Soviet disinformation, the Soviets were reemphasizing the importance of deception and disinformation and redoubling their efforts in these areas.

In May 1959, the Soviet leadership had transformed the KGB from a domestic repressive apparatus into a more sophisticated tool for influencing foreign affairs, one that included a KGB active measures department called Department D. According to CIA testimony in 1961, the KGB produced at least 32 forgeries of official U.S. documents in the previous 4 years (some went undetected) covering diverse topics but all portraying the United States as a major threat to world peace with imperial designs on the Third World. In 1971, the Soviets again upgraded Department D, making it a “Service” (Service A) and placed it under the direction of a KGB general. In this organizational structure, the Soviets built up a formidable disinformation bureaucracy of some 700 officers⁵² and integrated it with their larger active measures and strategic intelligence operations, which involved thousands of other personnel.⁵³ As CIA Director William Casey would later note, “perhaps the most important characteristic of the Soviet active measures program [was] its centralization and integration”:

There are three basic organizations responsible [for active measures]. Each of these organizations pursues its own programs—but these programs are carefully

*orchestrated and integrated into an overall campaign. The Soviet Communist Party's International Information Department is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of Soviet media campaigns. Another organ of the Communist Party, the International Department of the Communist Party, coordinates the activities of various front groups and friendship societies, as well as the role of foreign communist parties. Finally, Service "A" of the KGB provides covert support to Soviet disinformation efforts.*⁵⁴

Integrating these diverse activity sets allowed the Soviets to react quickly to historical developments. For example, after President John F. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, the KGB paid an American communist and Soviet agent in New York City to publish and distribute a book that used KGB forgeries to support the claim that Kennedy was killed by a right-wing racist conspiracy with help from the FBI and CIA.⁵⁵ The book came out less than 10 months later and just before the Warren Commission released its findings that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. By contrast, U.S. efforts to counter Soviet disinformation were anything but centralized, integrated, and timely—indeed 15 years later, attempts to counter Soviet disinformation had virtually disappeared.

Rebounding to Take the Offensive: 1977–1981

Despite détente and the intelligence reforms of the mid-1970s, some people remained convinced of the need to counter Soviet disinformation and deception. This view was not popular in the intelligence bureaucracy and even less so in academia, but in Congress it found fertile ground in a number of offices. Several congressional staff and investigators on the Senate Intelligence Committee and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, notably Herbert Romerstein, Angelo Codevilla, and Kenneth deGraffenried, were interested in studying and exposing Soviet deception and active measures. These staffers used their positions to push the intelligence agencies to start reporting again on active measures—something the CIA had not done since 1965—particularly during the final 2 years of the Carter administration when support for détente was wearing thin in the face of aggressive Soviet behavior.⁵⁶

On April 20, 1979, CIA Director Stansfield Turner was testifying before the House Intelligence Committee on new regulations that prevented the CIA from using American media. Congressman John Ashbrook (R-OH) suddenly changed the subject and asked if the Soviets used agents of influence in non-Eastern Bloc countries' media.⁵⁷ The director stated that he thought so but that the Agency had no hard evidence. Ashbrook then asked the CIA to produce

a report on the issue as an appendix to the report on the hearings. The following year, in February of 1980, Congressman C.W. Young (R-FL) requested CIA testimony to the House Intelligence Committee on Soviet forgeries during hearings entitled “Active Soviet Measures: The Forgery Offensive.” The interventions by Ashbrook and Young did not receive much attention, but they were notable as the first signs of congressional interest in the topic in 19 years. Herbert Romerstein, who was close to Congressman Ashbrook and an important House Intelligence Committee staff member interested in Soviet influence operations, would become the Nation’s leading expert on Soviet active measures and the key subject matter expert on the Active Measures Working Group (see textbox 3).

Some sympathetic congressmen and a few of their staff, along with a small number of supporters in academia,⁵⁸ managed to shine some of the national spotlight on Soviet active measures, but the general deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations was a more important development shaping the U.S. response to Soviet disinformation. America began to take a more confrontational attitude toward the Soviet Union. President Jimmy Carter began the process by challenging Moscow on its human rights record. President Ford had refused to meet with Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in order to safeguard progress on détente. In contrast, the Carter administration, which took office in 1977, emphasized human rights. It confronted the Soviet Union over its suppression of the Solidarity movement in Poland founded in late 1980 by Lech Wałęsa and other trade-union organizers. As Robert Gates later noted, Soviet leaders perceived Carter’s support for human rights as a threat to their legitimacy: “Through his human rights policies, [President Carter] became the first president since Truman to challenge directly the legitimacy of the Soviet government in the eyes of its own people. And the Soviets immediately recognized this for the fundamental challenge it was: they believed he sought to overthrow their system.”⁵⁹ President Carter’s human rights agenda shifted the delicate balance that U.S. leaders maintained between cooperation and confrontation with the Soviet Union toward the latter.

However, it was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 rather than Soviet human rights violations that doomed détente. President Carter adopted “punitive” measures against the Soviet Union including a grain embargo and an American boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games, but the Iranian hostage crisis and interagency squabbling limited the administration’s ability to rebuild a commitment to a new strategy of confrontation.⁶⁰ Relations between Carter’s Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State were so bad that the officials were not even talking. The President told National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski to work it out, but he was not able to. Interagency stalemate over how to

Textbox 3. Herbert Romerstein's Career and Network

Herbert Romerstein has been described as an “institution.”¹ Certainly he made a major impact in countering Soviet disinformation, something his entire life experience positioned him to do well. As a teenager, he was an ardent Stalinist, but he soon had a complete change of heart. As one friend notes, “he emerged from the belly of the whale” totally committed for the rest of his life to exposing totalitarian methods as a threat to a free society.² By the end of high school, he was informing the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) about the activities of his communist classmates and teachers.³ After serving in the Korean War, he worked for the New York State Legislature’s investigation into communist summer camps and charities. In 1965, he moved to the Federal Government and became the chief investigator on the Republican side for the House Committee on Un-American Activities, a position he held until 1971. He remained the minority chief investigator for the committee until 1975, and served as a professional staff member for the House Intelligence Committee from 1978 to 1983.⁴

In all these positions, Romerstein augmented his passion for investigating and exposing the activities of American communists and the KGB with a knack for forming alliances with like-minded activists. He readily shared his knowledge and made friends easily. The number of people who counted him as friend and tutor on active measures was extensive.⁵ He had a large network among congressional staff and knew many Congressmen. He also developed professional contacts with think tank researchers and academics. In the executive branch, Romerstein knew and worked closely with FBI experts and Defense Intelligence Agency executives. When he moved to the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1983, it was not long before he had a warm relationship with the director, Charles Wick. He also was welcomed in highly classified meetings on active measures at the National Security Council staff, where some of his former allies in Congress had positions during the Reagan administration. He also had extensive contacts overseas in intelligence and diplomatic circles, especially in Europe and Israel, which he used to get the message on disinformation out. Romerstein readily introduced his contacts to one another.⁶

His critics accused him of never losing the Stalinist mindset despite switching sides. His admirers pointed out that those who denigrated Romerstein refused to argue with him. He had an unparalleled ability to comprehend, expose, and rip apart arguments favoring Soviet policy positions, which he revealed time and again in public and private gatherings. He once chided the Soviets for an incorrect quotation of Lenin in a public forum, leaving

Textbox 3. Herbert Romerstein's Career and Network (cont.)

the Soviet representatives dumbfounded that a USIA official outquoted their own Lenin expert. He was relentless in pursuing Soviet disinformation, and the Soviets paid homage to his success by trying to discredit him.

For example, they attacked Romerstein (and, by extension, the Active Measures Working Group) with a forgery in hopes of implicating the United States in its own disinformation campaigns.⁷ The forgery of a letter from Romerstein to Senator David Durenberger (R-MN) falsely outlined a campaign to inflate the death toll of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, which at the time was the subject of much speculation in the Western press. The Soviets took the letterhead and signature block for the forgery from an authentic copy of a letter Romerstein had written to another U.S. official detailing, ironically, a forgery used against that official. The Soviets arranged for a Czech diplomat to request a copy of the letter. Romerstein agreed to provide the copy but discreetly marked it so that it could be identified later if used for illicit purposes. When the forgery surfaced in August 1986, it carried the unique marking, which USIA quickly used to expose the forgery in a press conference.⁸ Instead of a news report on scandalous U.S. disinformation, the Soviets got a *Washington Post* story on Soviet forgeries.

After moving to USIA as the head of its counter Soviet disinformation office in 1983, Romerstein devoted himself full-time to exposing Soviet disinformation, often through the efforts of the Active Measures Working Group. He retired in 1989 just as the Soviet Union was beginning to unravel but continued to work as a consultant to the U.S. Government while teaching and writing about Soviet intelligence.

¹ Interviewee 18, a senior intelligence official, May 13, 2011.

² Richard H. Shultz, phone interview with authors, July 29, 2011.

³ Jacob Weisberg, "Cold War Without End," available at <www-personal.umich.edu/~sanders/214/other/news/19991128mag-weisberg.html>.

⁴ Romerstein's biography for an Ashbrook Center colloquium, available at <www.ashbrook.org/events/colloqui/2001/romerstein.html>.

⁵ For example, Romerstein had Jim Milburn invited to Dr. Godson's events in the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, and he introduced John Dziak to Bill Houghton at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

⁶ Herbert Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group: Successful Template for Strategic Influence," in *Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda and Political Warfare*, ed. J.M. Waller, 200 (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2008).

Textbox 3. Herbert Romerstein's Career and Network (cont.)

⁷ FBI, "Soviet Active Measures in the United States, 1986–1987," unpublished report, June 1987, 10–12.

⁸ The diplomat later admitted sending the letter that he had been given to Prague where it probably passed to Moscow and the KGB. See *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986–1987* (Washington, DC: Department of State, October 1987).

manage U.S.-Soviet relations handicapped the administration's ability to mount a concerted response to the Soviets, including a response to Soviet active measures.⁶¹

The Soviets were not similarly constrained. They even went so far as to target President Carter himself with disinformation in September 1980.⁶² The KGB produced a forged NSC document that was then run in an American communist newspaper under the title "Carter's Secret Plan to Keep Black Africans and Black Americans at Odds."⁶³ The case is illustrative of both Soviet tactics and the lack of American readiness to respond. TASS (Telegrafnoye agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz) picked up and distributed the article, and the KGB disseminated the TASS piece around the world through Soviet embassies. In under a month, the KGB had produced a forgery, published it through an American agent, disseminated the disinformation via TASS stringers who wrote an article citing the American article for legitimacy, and then redistributed it to their agents of influence around the world.⁶⁴ In contrast, the few U.S. experts on Soviet disinformation within the national security bureaucracy had no high-level access or organizational vehicle for coordinating a response. Therefore, the White House had to answer the charges directly if it felt the need, which it did. It held a press conference on September 17 to protest the forgery. It was a partial success. The *Washington Post* reported the White House's exposure of the forgery on page two. However, the White House spokesman, feeling the need to be cautious, refused to identify the source of the forgery. As a result, the *Post's* reporter was left to speculate about the forgery's origins, raising the question of whether Carter's political foes—specifically Ronald Reagan—were responsible.⁶⁵ As the saying goes, "the lie was halfway around the world while the truth was still getting its boots on."

Such shenanigans did nothing to improve U.S.-Soviet relations, which were already on a downward trajectory for multiple reasons, but particularly because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the United States, "most experts would probably have agreed that [the global balance of power] had been titling in Moscow's favor through most of the 1970s"⁶⁶; the invasion of Afghanistan seemed to put the exclamation mark on this realignment. With U.S. leaders trying to limit damage from the Vietnam debacle, stem strategic disengagement by Congress, and over-

come the agonizing self-doubt inflicted by Watergate and other scandals, some believed that the United States was on the strategic defensive and in danger of irreversible decline. One scholar who would later play a key role in establishing the Active Measures Working Group worried that the Soviets were on the verge of “psychologically anesthetizing Americans” against the implications of expanding Soviet power.⁶⁷ He and other national security conservatives desperately wanted to reverse the situation, and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan helped them do so by alarming the American public and facilitating the electoral shift that brought Reagan to office.

President Reagan’s election ushered in an entirely different political philosophy and made confrontation with the Soviet Union a much more salient feature of American foreign policy. Reagan challenged Soviet power rhetorically, strategically, and covertly, and sought to reassert American leadership and geopolitical strength. Many of the men and women who had rung the alarm bell on Soviet active measures now entered the Reagan administration and set about reinvigorating intelligence, and public diplomacy in particular. In doing so, they emphasized the need to counter Soviet active measures and set the stage for creating the Active Measures Working Group.

The “Reagan Revolution” and Countering Soviet Disinformation: Early 1981

Ronald Reagan entered office with an agenda that promised a *volte face* in U.S.-Soviet relations and with an apparent popular mandate for that agenda. He had defeated a more moderate Republican in the primaries, and then won 489 out of 538 electoral votes and the popular vote by almost 10 percentage points.⁶⁸ He also had, for the first time in 28 years, a Republican-controlled Senate to help execute his national security initiatives. He ran on a platform that asserted “the premier challenge facing the United States, its allies, and the entire globe is to check the Soviet Union’s global ambitions.” The platform argued the Soviet Union was “accelerating its drive for military superiority,” “intensifying its . . . ideological combat,” and mounting a threat greater than any other “in the 200-year history of the United States.”

Reagan’s approach was straightforward. He told Richard Allen, who would become his first national security advisor: “My idea of American policy towards the Soviet Union is simple, and some would say simplistic. It is this: we win and they lose. What do you think of that?”⁶⁹ With such an approach, the delicate balance between cooperation and confrontation tipped strongly toward the latter. The party’s platform was equally straightforward in depicting how U.S.-Soviet relations would be managed in the Reagan administration. The platform called for “immediate” increases in critical defense programs and sustained spending “sufficient to close the gap with the Soviets, and ultimately reach the position of military superiority that the American people demand.”

The platform also made clear that the Reagan administration would “undertake an urgent effort to rebuild the intelligence agencies” in order to “improve U.S. Intelligence capabilities for technical and clandestine collection, cogent analysis, coordinated counterintelligence, and covert action.” In other words, it promised to undo what intelligence traditionalists considered some of the deleterious effects of the reforms from the 1970s. The fact that Reagan’s running mate, George Bush, was a former director of the CIA reinforced the impression that the Reagan team was serious about delivering on these promises. Similarly, the administration promised to rebuild public diplomacy organizations and “spare no efforts to publicize to the world the fundamental differences in the two systems,” “articulate U.S. values and policies,” and “highlight the weaknesses of totalitarianism.” Above all, Reagan insisted that the government put an end to “self-censorship” to preserve good relations. On the contrary, it would aggressively “counter lies with truth” and consider fighting the “idea war” as important as military and economic competition.⁷⁰

Like all incoming administrations, the Reagan team had to pursue its agenda with initiatives executed by the bureaucracy. The administration communicated its intention to put U.S.-Soviet relations on a new track through public pronouncements and symbolic gestures.⁷¹ It also considered forceful options for shaking up the bureaucracy, such as abolishing the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, but ultimately relied on strong leadership of the individual departments and agencies to overcome entrenched resistance to its agenda.⁷² To revitalize intelligence and elevate public diplomacy, Reagan brought two close friends with big resumes to Washington to run the CIA and USIA, respectively: William Casey and Charles Wick. Casey was Reagan’s campaign manager and served on the transition team following the election. During his confirmation hearings, which were held quickly (on January 13, 1981), he emphasized his intention to end the CIA’s period of “institutional self-doubt.” He thought previous criticism of the Agency had been excessive and that intelligence capabilities had to be rebuilt.

Casey found that the CIA was not collecting much intelligence on Soviet active measures, and that it was not inclined to analyze the issue either. Early in March 1981, he pushed his deputy, Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, to pay greater attention to propaganda, subversion, terrorism, and other less tangible threats to U.S. interests. In April, Secretary of State Alexander Haig helped by asking for an interagency assessment of Soviet subversion and support for terrorism by June 1, which kicked off a huge bureaucratic struggle in the Intelligence Community.⁷³ To help circumvent bureaucratic resistance, Casey created a new Office of Global Issues in 1981 as part of a larger reorganization of the CIA’s Directorate of Intelligence. The office looked not only at transnational issues such as narcotics and terrorism, but also at the “underside” of Soviet behavior, including covert action.⁷⁴ Casey tasked the Agency to collect more information on

Soviet active measures⁷⁵ so that by late 1981, all CIA stations were “to submit a monthly report on Soviet covert action (‘active measures’) in their respective countries as a way of permitting more aggressive counter operations.”⁷⁶

Casey’s reorganization and taskings helped move the CIA toward production of a Top Secret/Codeword study called “Soviet Active Measures.” The study was chaired by Dick Malzahn and included experts like Benjamin Fischer and Jack Dziak from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).⁷⁷ It was released in July 1981 and quickly had an impact in the war of ideas. In an August speech, President Reagan used material from the study to highlight the magnitude of the Soviet disinformation campaign against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nuclear force modernization in Europe: “We have information that the Soviet Union spent about one hundred million dollars in Western Europe alone a few years ago when the announcement was first made of the invention of the neutron warhead, and I don’t know how much they’re spending now, but they’re starting the same kind of propaganda drive.”⁷⁸

The President cited the CIA estimate of Soviet expenditures as a fact, but in doing so successfully made the larger point that the Soviet Union devoted major resources to disinformation because it worked. Once the CIA started monitoring Soviet disinformation, Reagan wanted Wick to pursue a more aggressive public diplomacy campaign at USIA to counter such Soviet disinformation.

Wick cochaired Reagan’s inaugural committee, so he was in Washington with Reagan early on. However, his confirmation hearings were not held until the end of April. Once confirmed, he moved out forcefully calling for “a wartime urgency” in pursuing public diplomacy initiatives to confront the Soviet Union. He advocated adding a television arm to USIA’s radio station in West Berlin and a worldwide live television program to celebrate Poland’s Solidarity movement.⁷⁹ He also launched Project Truth, a controversial effort to counter anti-American propaganda using a variety of methods, including “Soviet Propaganda Alert,” a monthly analysis of Soviet propaganda and misinformation themes and targets.⁸⁰

Wick could rely on backing from the President, who made it clear that he considered USIA’s public diplomacy a favored foreign policy tool. Among other things, President Reagan directed government agencies to cooperate with Wick on Project Truth, specifically by declassifying material so that it could be used in the Soviet propaganda alerts.⁸¹ Secure in his relationship with the President, Wick was a demanding task master at USIA. A senior Foreign Service Officer remembered, “Wick slammed into the USIA with a body punch. You did what he said immediately and picked up the pieces later on. He was demanding things at the time that no one was prepared to deliver. He scared the hell out of people. We hadn’t seen another director like this, ever.”⁸²

Wick's agenda immediately brought him into conflict with Voice of America (VOA), the organization that broadcast radio programs to the Soviet bloc. Wick wanted to use VOA broadcasts more aggressively to confront the Soviet Union ideologically. VOA "journalists" strongly resisted the new policy direction, asserting that objectivity was VOA's strength and key to its influence.⁸³ By May, VOA was circulating an internal newsletter that recorded the increasing number of complaints made by the Department of State, U.S. Embassies, and NSC about VOA news items and reports. The newsletter documented that the Department of State and overseas Embassies were upset that VOA broadcasts were now rocking bilateral relations with the Soviet Union and its satellites, and that Reagan NSC members were unhappy that the broadcasts were not sufficiently aggressive. By November, Wick decided the solution was to purge VOA's top career civil servants and replace them with Wick's confidants. Over the course of the following year, Wick would demand the removal of VOA's Soviet division chief, Barbara Allen, a career Foreign Service Officer, secure a National Security Decision Directive that ordered the VOA to incorporate "vigorous advocacy of current policy positions of the US government," and push a \$1.3 billion program to rebuild and modernize VOA programming and technical capabilities.⁸⁴ In the face of Wick's activism, and support from the President, the differences between the Department of State's culture of private diplomacy and USIA's culture of public diplomacy began to subside.⁸⁵

With senior administration officials advertising the new political mindset on U.S.-Soviet relations, subordinate Reagan administration officials went to work on moving the bureaucracy further in their direction. When President Reagan was shot just 69 days after taking office, many projects were put on hold, but not rebuilding intelligence and defense; everyone knew those priorities were inviolate.⁸⁶ Thus, the national security team kept pushing their agenda throughout the first year of Reagan's tenure. One important objective was getting the bureaucracy to confront the impact of Soviet deception. Doing so would prove a titanic battle. Political appointees at the NSC and in the Pentagon began by pushing for a new National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet active measures. Unable to secure the estimate, they settled for the lesser version, an "interagency intelligence memorandum" on the topic. Even getting this product was incredibly difficult. DIA had to produce intelligence on Soviet active measures to force the CIA to give up what they knew on the subject.⁸⁷

Bureaucratic warfare really began in earnest in the fall of 1981 when Kenneth deGraffenreid, the senior director of NSC Intelligence Program, began pushing for a reorganization of counterintelligence and intelligence capabilities. One quick result was Executive Order 12333 which, among other things, specifically called on the CIA and FBI to coordinate counterintelligence activities within and outside the United States.⁸⁸ Most of the other initiatives stalled in

interagency forums.⁸⁹ To pave the way for larger reform, deGraffenreid believed that the Intelligence Community needed a damage assessment study on Soviet deception, and he succeeded in getting President Reagan to authorize such a study in January of 1982. Getting the effort off the ground required, among other things, having the President override CIA Deputy Director Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, who insisted deception was not an important issue.

Making substantive progress on the study was even more difficult. As one participant noted, the interagency task force formed to do the highly classified study consisted of “parties with vested interests who could hardly be expected to offer up their empires to radical reform.”⁹⁰ No consensus emerged from the effort even on relatively minor issues such as interagency background investigations and security clearances. Organizations purposefully set classification levels too high in order to complicate the task force’s work, the FBI often refused to attend, and occasionally participating organizations simply withheld key information.⁹¹ With high-level support, the group was able to make some progress, but every case was “like a root canal.”⁹²

With the damage assessment effort bogged down, deGraffenreid pushed for modest counterintelligence improvements. Along with David Major, his deputy and the first FBI employee ever assigned to the NSC, deGraffenreid resurrected and tried to implement 400 counterintelligence recommendations dating from the waning days of the Carter administration.⁹³ Over a period of 4 years, the 400 recommendations were whittled down to those 12, and even these met stiff resistance from the intelligence bureaucracy. Bureaucratic resistance was weakened, however, by events that suggested the United States was more vulnerable than many believed. For example, Major was part of a team of FBI security experts asked by the State Department to determine if the Soviets had bugged communications at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The FBI found the Embassy honeycombed with electronic surveillance devices, including the CIA’s secure floors. The CIA, National Security Agency (NSA), and State Department all stated that the FBI team was following faulty methodology, but the findings nonetheless made an impression when Major presented them to Reagan in late 1983.⁹⁴

In 1984, the office that Casey created to look at transnational issues managed a classified conclave to discuss strategic deception. The intent was to break the bureaucratic logjam on the issue and find some common ground between those who believed deception was important and those who did not think the Soviet Union was trying to deceive the United States, much less doing so successfully.⁹⁵ The group, sequestered at a remote location in Northern Virginia (the historic Airlie House near Warrenton), included senior leaders from the executive and legislative branches. Casey, Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-WY), who was chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, members of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory

Board, and relevant NSC staff attended. Reagan appointees wanted the bureaucracy to admit that Soviet deception was a real problem.⁹⁶ In this regard, they were disappointed. One “owner” of a major intelligence discipline after another presented their damage assessment only to conclude that they were invulnerable to deception (even if other disciplines were not). One speaker noted, for example, how Soviet dummy submarines made of rubber to fool satellite surveillance bent in high winds, exposing them as fakes. The CIA’s director of operations offered other evidence of Soviet deception, but reached the same conclusion: it was impossible for the Soviets to deceive us.⁹⁷

In the year following the Airlie House retreat, new revelations shook the confidence of the Intelligence Community and made intelligence reforms easier for the Reagan administration. A series of Americans in trusted intelligence positions were arrested for spying. So many traitors were caught in 1985 that it was referred to in the media as “the year of the spy.” Perhaps the most shocking case was the FBI’s arrest of John Walker, a Navy chief warrant officer. The Walker spy ring was run by a low-ranking Sailor, operated undetected for 18 years, and gave away an astounding array of secrets that did incalculable damage to U.S. interests. The case highlighted how damaging spies could be and also how poor U.S. counterintelligence was at catching them, but news inside the U.S. clandestine services was even worse. “In 1985 and 1986,” it was revealed, “the United States lost every covert intelligence source it had on Soviet territory.”⁹⁸ Soviet moles in the U.S. intelligence services seemed the most likely explanation for this unprecedented intelligence disaster. Following these developments, President Reagan mandated the implementation of the 12 counterintelligence recommendations that deGraffenreid had been pushing over the protests of the bureaucracy—the Department of State, in particular.⁹⁹

This brief overview of the Reagan administration’s numerous intelligence initiatives illustrates how difficult it was for the administration to implement its agenda over bureaucratic resistance. The Intelligence Community did not readily accept the Reagan team’s assessment on Soviet deception, active measures, and penetration. It would take time to soften up the bureaucracy. Some who participated in the meetings at Airlie House believe that the event was a milestone paving the way for more attention to Soviet deception,¹⁰⁰ while others saw it as part of a longer, ongoing process to educate the bureaucracy.¹⁰¹ Whether because of the conference and its written report, or due to a combination of forces, reforms were made. The CIA training curriculum was changed to include deception and a dedicated office in CIA for analysis of deception followed. Similar development previously had occurred at DIA, and now they took place elsewhere in the Intelligence Community with courses and offices devoted to deception popping up at NSA and elsewhere.¹⁰² Even the long-running damage assessment exercise even-

tually was institutionalized as part of the National Intelligence Council in the form of a Foreign Denial and Deception Committee.¹⁰³

Yet the Airlie House retreat also illustrates the strength of the resistance among career intelligence officials to Reagan's intelligence agenda. Three years into the President's first term, Congressmen, academics, and journalists were conducting a more vibrant debate on the subject of deception than the Intelligence Community. For example, public concerns about Soviet cheating on arms control agreements and the fear that the Soviets had gained a significant strategic advantage as a result had reached the point where many believed the future for any kind of arms limitation agreement was at stake.¹⁰⁴ In contrast, the vast majority of senior career intelligence experts were not concerned, and many deeply resented what they considered attempts to impose an alternative view.¹⁰⁵ The bureaucracy also strongly resisted the Reagan administration's agenda on counterintelligence, where many initiatives stalled in small interagency groups. President Reagan only forced through modest counterintelligence reforms by fiat after revelations of major penetrations of the Intelligence Community became public.

A similar shift in policy perspective and attendant bureaucratic struggle was evident in public diplomacy. When political appointees tried to implement a more aggressive public diplomacy effort, they encountered resistance from career officials and small interagency groups.¹⁰⁶ For example, the Pentagon's new publication on *Soviet Military Power*—a glossy overview of growing Soviet military power and strategy that began in October 1981—was produced and disseminated over the adamant objections of CIA career officials who thought the publication trespassed on the CIA's mandate to assess foreign military capabilities.¹⁰⁷ Other Reagan administration public diplomacy efforts such as modernization of VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty also were controversial and resisted by career officials.

The Reagan administration's slow but determined progress on intelligence and public diplomacy reform is relevant to the Active Measures Working Group for several reasons. First, Reagan's fundamental "reset" in U.S.-Soviet relations, resolutely pursued by top intelligence and public diplomacy officials, was the precondition for the creation of the Active Measures Working Group. The administration had put the bureaucracy on notice that the underlying assumption of détente—that the Soviet Union was too powerful and permanent to confront—was dead. Confronting the Soviet Union was very much in vogue, and the Active Measures Working Group was one of many initiatives reflecting this shift in policy. The Reagan administration intelligence and public diplomacy initiatives also were noteworthy for this research because they helped prepare the bureaucracy for the substance of the Active Measures Working Group's activities. Getting the CIA to report on Soviet active measures and USIA to take

Soviet disinformation seriously meant there would be reporting and analysis available to the working group. Finally, the Active Measures Working Group is a particularly interesting topic for research precisely because its experience is so different from most Reagan intelligence and public diplomacy initiatives. Even though active measures were as controversial as deception and counterintelligence and were linked to those issues, the Reagan administration was able to get the group set up and operating effectively in short order. The forces that allowed this initiative to take off quickly whereas so many others floundered merit investigation.¹⁰⁸

The Founding of the Group: 1981–1984

The Active Measures Working Group was formed early in the Reagan administration.¹⁰⁹ The entire set of factors leading to the group's creation remains somewhat obscure. There is strong evidence that senior political appointees and active measures experts in the CIA wanted the Department of State to create the group because its products would be more credible than those of the Agency.¹¹⁰ Whether and how the CIA approached State on this issue is unclear. What is well known, however, are the proximate cause and sequence of events leading to the group's creation.

Early in the Reagan administration, some mid-level officials in the Department of State took the initiative to mount a more robust effort to counter aggressive Soviet propaganda. In particular, Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Palmer, who was working European affairs under Assistant Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger, took an interest in the topic. Palmer was a maverick who was unafraid to take bureaucratic risks, particularly in the area of public diplomacy.¹¹¹ He had a long-standing interest in supporting democratization within the Soviet Union, for which public diplomacy was a favored tool. He also was directly responsible for dealing with the Soviet campaign to stop the deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles, the culminating step in implementing NATO's 1979 decision to modernize its Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe.¹¹² He had already established an interagency working group called Shaping European Attitudes¹¹³ to find ways to build political support for INF deployment with public diplomacy. Another State official concerned about Soviet disinformation was Robert Peck, deputy assistant secretary for South Asian affairs. Peck had previously been a personal victim of Soviet disinformation in Turkey, and his current area of responsibility included India, where increasingly aggressive Soviet disinformation was taking a toll on U.S. interests (see textbox 4).¹¹⁴

Both Palmer and Peck could see how Soviet active measures threatened American diplomatic priorities. Together they had little difficulty convincing Secretary of State Alexander Haig that State should take the lead for an interagency effort to counter Soviet disinformation.¹¹⁵

Textbox 4. When Active Measures and Disinformation Turn Deadly

The Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies often targeted individual Americans who were effectively limiting Soviet ability to achieve some objective. In 1980, the same pro-Soviet Indian paper that later helped the KGB spread disinformation about the origins of the AIDS epidemic successfully blocked the appointment of a career Department of State official, George Griffin, to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. The paper wrongly accused him of being a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer and spreading falsehoods about the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan when he was stationed in Kabul as deputy chief of mission.¹ One expert notes that East Germany's intelligence service was uncommonly successful in compromising U.S. personnel.² If they "determined that a CIA officer was good at his work and might be recruiting genuine agents [they] had the option of interrupting or derailing his career either by surreptitiously exposing him with a story planted in the foreign media or by tipping off an allied or friendly intelligence service to his identity."³

On occasion, Soviet disinformation was integrated with other active measures, including assassination and other so-called wet operations. In such circumstances, Soviet disinformation could prove indirectly lethal. For example, the East German and Czech intelligence services collaborated to publish a book in 1968 entitled *Who's Who in the CIA* that led to the deaths of at least two Americans and caused untold amounts of trouble for others. Daniel Mitrione, a U.S. Agency for International Development officer, was executed by Tupamaro terrorists in 1970 who justified the killing by citing *Who's Who in the CIA*. Mitrione's name was listed in the book despite the fact he was never a CIA officer. According to Ladislav Bittman, who claimed to have helped write the book, about half the names in it were actual CIA officers while the rest were various U.S. officials serving abroad. Five years later, in 1975, Richard Welch, another American listed in the book (who actually was the CIA station chief in Athens,) was shot and killed by Greek terrorists. His name and address had been published in Greek and American publications, but it was later established that the terrorists had been watching him since the summer of 1975 because his name was in *Who's Who in the CIA*.

Active measures also could lead to spectacular attacks on American interests by third parties. In November of 1979, a Muslim messianic cult attacked Mecca, the holiest place in Islam. Hundreds were killed in the ensuing siege. Sensing an opportunity to weaken the American position in the Middle East, Soviet diplomats spread the rumor that

Textbox 4. When Active Measures and Disinformation Turn Deadly (cont.)

America and Israel were behind the attack on Mecca. The rumor sparked an attack by the student union of the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. The students had been planning to emulate Iranian-style protests against the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad when, on November 21, an announcer commented on the Soviet rumor during his broadcast of a cricket match between India and Pakistan.⁴ In the ensuing riot, the U.S. Embassy was attacked, one American was kidnapped, two Pakistani employees died, a Marine guard was shot and killed, and an American contractor was beaten and left to burn to death in his ransacked apartment.⁵

¹ Bernard Gwertzman, "India Bars Senior U.S. Diplomat, Stirring a Dispute," *The New York Times*, September 2, 1981, A10.

² John Marks, "The Spymaster Unmasked," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 4, 1993, available at <www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/930412/archive_014952.htm>.

³ Benjamin B. Fischer, "Deaf, dumb and blind: The CIA and East Germany," *East German Foreign Intelligence: Myth, Reality and Controversy*, ed. Macrakis Kristie, Thomas W. Friis, and Helmut Müller-Enbergs (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁴ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 36ff.

⁵ For fuller historical accounts of Soviet active measures, and, in addition to the government reports cited elsewhere in this document, see Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984). This is the most academic and broad-gauge of the books and covers how active measures fit into Soviet strategy. For detailed narrative of Soviet active measures, see Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko, *The KGB Against the "Main Enemy": How the Soviet Intelligence Service Operates Against the United States* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1989). It includes many fascinating examples and explanations of Soviet active measures. See also Ladislav Bittman, *The Deception Game: Czechoslovak Intelligence in Soviet Political Warfare* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Research Corp., 1972); and Stanislav Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side: My Life in the KGB* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988). Bittman's book is an insider's tell-all coupled with insightful analysis and conceptual explanations of influence activities. Levchenko's book is partly biographical digressions and partly an explanation of KGB active measures in Japan and the wider world. It is also valuable for insights into what life was like for KGB defectors after they turned against their country.

Haig clearly thought the topic important since he had already requested a Top Secret/Codeword study on Soviet active measures from the CIA. With Haig's concurrence, Palmer and Peck went to see Dennis Kux to ask him to take up the initiative. As Kux recalls: "They came to me because, they said: 'We can't do this unless we have really good information. Your office is the closest place in State to CIA. Can you come up with something on this? Can you work with us on this?' So I said that we would try. Gradually, we worked out an interagency system."¹¹⁶

The two men mentioned to Kux that they came to him because he had access to the CIA, which was often unwilling to share information with State.¹¹⁷ In that regard, Kux was the natural choice to lead the effort because he was the deputy assistant secretary for coordination at the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which was in charge of State's liaisons with the Intelligence Community.¹¹⁸

Kux, a career Foreign Service Officer, initially had reservations. He knew Soviet active measures were a problem, but he also knew the top echelons of the Department of State were neutral if not ambivalent on the topic.¹¹⁹ He also had been exposed to some of the Reagan administration's more ideological political appointees, who were inclined to confuse standard Soviet propaganda and even foreign policy positions with disinformation intended to mislead people.¹²⁰ Kux was sure that any effort to counter Soviet disinformation should be done in a nonpolemical style and based on solid information. Palmer and Peck agreed, and Kux said he would try to do it. He investigated the issue for a while with his INR staff and reached two conclusions, both of which ran counter to State predilections. First, instead of shrinking back, the United States needed to publicize Soviet misdeeds. Second, it should be the Department of State that led the effort for the sake of credibility and to ensure the effort was managed with political sensitivity.

Kux believed the group would need to concentrate on disinformation, exposing base falsehoods that no reasonable person would countenance as acceptable diplomatic discourse (that is, not mere propaganda). Kux turned to the CIA, Foreign Service Posts, and USIA offices, asking them to gather the information needed for a realistic assessment of Soviet disinformation. Once he had a general idea of what the Soviets were up to, Kux formed an interagency group (some-time around the summer of 1981) to process the new information that INR was collecting. When the group began, it was chaired by State and included representatives from elsewhere in State, as well as the CIA, FBI, DOD, and USIA.¹²¹ Soon it also included members from the DIA, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and NSC staff. Attendance varied week to week and membership evolved over time. The group met weekly to analyze field reports, and over time participants began to see patterns and tactics in the information they had compiled. Armed

with an increasingly better understanding of Soviet disinformation tactics and methods, the group decided to publicize regularly what it uncovered.

The working group received additional impetus from the arrival of John Lenczowski, a Reagan political appointee in State's Bureau of European Affairs.¹²² Lenczowski arrived at State in May 1981 determined to invigorate American public diplomacy. His highest priority was strengthening Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, so they could overcome Soviet jamming and rapidly disseminate news of resistance to Soviet authority. This agenda was markedly assisted by KGB defector Stanislav Levchenko. In the summer of 1981, the CIA was making Levchenko available to State and other officials in order to educate them about Soviet goals and active measures techniques (see textbox 5).¹²³ About the same time, a less classified version (Secret as opposed to Top Secret/Codeword) of the CIA's study on Soviet active measures began circulating. The Secret version of the study had a press run of 3,000 copies—"perhaps the largest distribution of any CIA report" up to that point.¹²⁴ Both Levchenko and the CIA study were useful tools for calling attention to the Soviet propaganda, diplomatic, and active measures campaigns.

Lenczowski found a ready ally for his agenda in Mark Palmer, who "took to public diplomacy like a fish to water." Lenczowski reinforced Palmer's appreciation for public diplomacy by getting him involved in the Levchenko meetings where he heard first-hand accounts of Soviet political warfare techniques, including the Soviet campaign to stop INF modernization. Palmer in turn joined Lenczowski in championing greater use of public broadcasting in Europe, including a substantially increased public diplomacy budget proposal that was almost universally condemned in State. With Palmer's help, Lenczowski succeeded in getting \$2.5 billion to modernize VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.¹²⁵ The initiative went forward despite opposition from lower ranking officials, eventually making its way forward to President Reagan, who approved it.¹²⁶ In turn, Palmer sent Lenczowski to the newly formed Active Measures Working Group, where he met Kux and encouraged the group to take a more proactive role in countering disinformation.¹²⁷

Kux and Lenczowski agree that in 1981, career personnel at the State Department were not disposed to challenge Soviet disinformation and had to be encouraged. According to Kux, "the normal attitude in the Department of State was, 'We don't want to dignify that kind of stuff with a comment.'"¹²⁸ Similarly, Lenczowski recalls, "not challenging the Soviets on [active measures] was sort of a cultural impulse that had developed to the point of etiquette. You just couldn't talk about disinformation."¹²⁹ Most people in State believed that even blatant disinformation, including forgeries, was better left ignored.¹³⁰ Within this environment, Levchenko became a key and credible resource for convincing otherwise skeptical State personnel that Soviet disinformation was not just a marginal concern and that it needed

Textbox 5. Soviet Defectors and Disinformation

Eastern bloc and Soviet defectors provided the U.S. Government with insights into Soviet active measures strategy, organization, and methods, and indirectly played a role in the creation of the Active Measures Working Group.

Laszlo Szabo defected in 1965 from the Hungarian Embassy in London. Szabo was an active measures expert whose task had been generating friction between the United States and United Kingdom. He testified to the U.S. Senate in 1966 that the Hungarian intelligence service worked closely with the KGB, that Soviet “advisors” had access to everything, and that Hungarian disinformation activities were controlled by the Soviets.¹

Ladislav Bittman was a Czech intelligence officer with information on Soviet active measures.² He defected to the United States in 1968 after the Soviets crushed popular protests during “the Czech Spring.” He testified under an assumed name in 1971 telling the Senate, among other things, about Czech assistance to the KGB to smear Barry Goldwater (election manipulation the Soviets would repeat in later years).³ The clumsy effort portrayed Goldwater as a racist conspiring with the John Birch Society to conduct a coup d’état.

These two defectors were instrumental in revealing the extent to which the Soviet Union integrated and controlled the Warsaw Pact countries’ intelligence services. They also provided details on the goals and tactics of Soviet disinformation campaigns. Not a great deal was done with this information during the intelligence reform debates of the 1970s, but over a decade later, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) received another insider view of Soviet disinformation.

In October 1979, **Stanislav Levchenko**, a KGB officer in charge of the active measures division of the Tokyo KGB residence, contacted Americans and asked for asylum.⁴ By this time, the KGB had greatly expanded and upgraded its active measures capabilities, and Levchenko was able to tell the CIA exactly how the expanded organization operated. Levchenko became a major figure in the development of measures to combat Soviet active measures. He was brought in to brief government officials on the details of contemporary Soviet active measures, even while his debriefing process was ongoing and his presence in the United States was still sensitive.⁵

At the same time, Bittman, now using his real name, became more active in commentary on Soviet active measures. In 1980, he delivered a public statement on Soviet disinformation strategy and tactics. In the statement, he apologized for being one of the coauthors

Textbox 5. Soviet Defectors and Disinformation (cont.)

of *Who's Who in the CIA* that led to the assassination of an American whom the book wrongly identified as a CIA agent. By 1982, the Agency believed that it was safe enough to have Levchenko testify publicly, and he provided a penetrating look inside the Soviet active measures bureaucracy.⁶ All these defectors, but particularly Levchenko—because he was a Soviet and a more recent defector—helped the Reagan administration raise awareness in and outside government on Soviet active measures.⁷

¹ Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko, *The KGB Against the "Main Enemy": How the Soviet Intelligence Service Operates Against the United States* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1989), 271.

² Ladislav Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985), ix.

³ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would go public to denounce a 1984 Soviet forgery designed to discredit President Ronald Reagan as a participant in "McCarthyism" during an election year. The forgery alleged that Reagan was working in collusion with the FBI and the House Committee on Un-American Activities to expose communist influence in Hollywood. See FBI, "Soviet Active Measures in the United States 1986–1987," unpublished report, June 1987, 70.

⁴ Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 165.

⁵ Levchenko was a "Public Law 110 Personage," allowing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to give him cover and economic support outside of normal immigration channels. The law allows the director of Central Intelligence, with concurrence from the attorney general, to admit up to 100 immigrants and their families to the United States each year to help protect national security. Typically, these are foreign defectors who have cooperated with the CIA. Stanislav Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side: My Life in the KGB* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), 181.

⁶ House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Soviet Active Measures*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 1982, 138.

⁷ John Lenczowski, interview by authors, March 11, 2011.

to be countered. His insights helped Lenczowski and Palmer sell their program for public diplomacy modernization, and also helped the Active Measures Working Group understand how Soviet disinformation campaigns worked.¹³¹

With insights from defectors such as Levchenko, and by trial and error, the Active Measures Working Group developed an approach that expanded the U.S. Government's monitoring of Soviet disinformation from a CIA-only activity into a full-blown interagency

counter-disinformation effort. Initially, most Soviet forgeries came to the group from the CIA, but soon the group developed its own Report-Analyze-Publicize (or RAP) methodology.¹³² The group instructed USIA overseas offices specifically to report all disinformation media stories and forgeries that they came across. When this information arrived at INR, in-house analysts as well as the CIA disinformation experts analyzed it. Initially, the CIA was instrumental in the analysis. The Agency was maintaining a computerized database of forgeries, had unfettered access to KGB defectors involved in active measures, and had at least five active measures and front group experts in its Directorate of Operations and Directorate of Intelligence.¹³³

On October 9, 1981, the group fired its first salvo against Soviet disinformation: *State Department Special Report 88, Soviet Active Measures: Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations*.¹³⁴ It was just a four-page overview of Soviet active measures techniques illustrated with examples of Soviet disinformation campaigns, but State distributed 14,000 copies of the report to news organizations and other interested parties worldwide.¹³⁵ Both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* covered the release of the report. Two months later on December 8, the State Department held another press conference to expose Soviet forgeries. They distributed copies of the fake documents to attending journalists and identified an activist who had contributed to the disinformation campaigns in Norway. This event received less press interest. The *New York Times* simply remarked that the event was consistent with the new administration's penchant for criticizing Soviet clandestine operations.¹³⁶

In less than a year, Kux and his interagency group had built a picture of ongoing Soviet disinformation and come up with a strategy for collecting, analyzing, and confronting it with fact-based research and publicity. The existence of the group and its work gave experts within bureaucracy an outlet for their knowledge. As if to illustrate this point, the group's next report was the initiative of a young INR analyst named David Hertzberg.¹³⁷ Over the fall and winter of 1981, Hertzberg noticed a stream of reporting on Soviet officials being expelled from countries, and took it upon himself to document and analyze the trend.¹³⁸ At the time, the Soviets were expanding their espionage activities, especially attempts to steal military technology and defense industry proprietary information. The increased activity was matched by an increase in the number of Soviet agents discovered and removed from countries for espionage. Hertzberg realized that if this data were compiled, it would reveal a trend of rising illegal activity entirely at odds with the benevolent image the Soviets were trying to project. Peter Knecht, a Public Affairs officer at State, called Hertzberg to see if the report could be declassified and published. The CIA balked at the exposure.

Publicity worried some officials in the CIA who feared that regular divulgence of intelligence on active measures could jeopardize the CIA's collection methods or even provoke retaliation against intelligence assets.¹³⁹ The FBI, which by the fall of 1981 also was sending participants to the group, shared this concern. Knecht therefore helped Hertzberg find open source information that could be used in lieu of CIA reporting. The results were published in February 1982 as an "informal research study for background information." INR decided to call the product a Foreign Affairs Note and entitled it *Expulsion of Soviet Representatives from Foreign Countries, 1970-81*.¹⁴⁰ The document generated news coverage and commentary on the expansion of Soviet spying and was directly cited by at least two major publications.¹⁴¹ Soviet media ignored the report, apparently hoping that it would soon be forgotten. Two months later, in April, Hertzberg gave the group more ammunition. Working closely with Wallace Spaulding, the CIA's foremost expert on Soviet front groups, Hertzberg produced a piece on the World Peace Council as a Soviet front organization, which the group reviewed and published as its second Foreign Affairs Note.¹⁴²

Congress noticed the group's activities, particularly at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence where Romerstein kept a close eye on anything involving Soviet active measures. Romerstein had given briefings to the group's members as they got up to speed on Soviet disinformation, and he attended some working group meetings where he was welcomed as an expert.¹⁴³ Romerstein may have prompted Representative Young on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to request hearings on Soviet active measures in July of 1982 (in effect updating the CIA testimony from 1980). In any case, he took responsibility for preparing the report on the hearings,¹⁴⁴ which included testimony from John McMahon, deputy director of the CIA, Edward J. O'Malley, assistant director for intelligence at the FBI, and Stanislav Levchenko, the KGB defector. The testimony covered the process and content of Soviet active measures as well as U.S. efforts to confront them. McMahon mentioned the CIA's efforts as well as the Active Measures Working Group and its Foreign Affairs Notes.

Just a few months after the group was mentioned in the Intelligence Committee hearings, it was thrust into the midst of a major policy issue. Earlier in the summer, almost a million people had gathered in New York's Central Park to protest the nuclear arms race. In August, the House of Representatives barely voted down a call for an immediate freeze on U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons by two votes.¹⁴⁵ The World Peace Council, Communist Party USA, and other Soviet front groups had a role in the freeze movement's leadership and planning. Reagan told veterans' groups that the National Movement for a Freeze on Nuclear Weapons was a group of "honest and sincere people" who were being manipulated by those "who want the weakening of America."¹⁴⁶ The nuclear freeze movement's leadership denied the claim and called the accusa-

tions of Soviet manipulation a “red herring” that distracted people from the real issues involved in the debate. When the media pressed the White House for evidence of foreign manipulation, it pointed to the working group’s special report on active measures and its Foreign Affairs Note on the World Peace Council.¹⁴⁷

The controversy over Soviet influence in the freeze movement prompted the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to release an unclassified version of its July report on the Soviet active measures hearings. Congressman Edward Boland (D-MA) released the report stating that it “demonstrates what we have known for a long time—that the Soviet Union utilizes considerable amounts of time, money and manpower attempting, both covertly and overtly, to influence individuals, organizations and events in the United States and around the world.” But, he added, “Soviet agents have had no significant influence on the nuclear freeze movement.”¹⁴⁸ When the press asked Representative Young to comment on the lack of Soviet involvement despite the administration’s statements to the contrary, he just said it was not surprising that the report drew no conclusions about the freeze movement since it did not focus on that subject.¹⁴⁹ From the working group’s point of view, the important thing was that Soviet active measures had come to the forefront of national debate.

Going into its second year, the Active Measures Working Group had momentum. It was reviewing Soviet disinformation regularly collected by State, USIA, and CIA, and was an active participant in the fight to counter Soviet disinformation.¹⁵⁰ The group was growing more comfortable with an activist posture. While State’s regional offices and Public Affairs bureau sent representatives to make sure that the group’s activities were not too provocative, other departments such as USIA and Defense could be relied upon to lean forward. Reagan appointees in DOD and some career officers and DIA analysts had embraced Wick’s more aggressive public diplomacy, often in contrast to State ambivalence or disapproval. General Richard Stilwell (a retired Army four-star) was promoting strategic psychological operations and eventually created an office for this purpose.¹⁵¹ He had the support of his immediate superior, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Fred Ikle.¹⁵² USIA and DOD sent multiple representatives to the group,¹⁵³ and they helped balance the CIA, FBI, and State representatives who tended to be more cautious. The FBI in particular was generally silent in meetings, at least initially. They had the technical competence to be quite helpful, but were reluctant to weigh in for fear of getting ahead of policy (especially after COINTELPRO).¹⁵⁴

With the group picking up steam and enjoying a growing record of success, Kux began looking for ways to make the group’s activities more effective. The group met once a week at most, and did not occupy all of Kux’s time or duties (or any member’s for that matter). There was room for

expanding the group's workload. Kux came up with the idea of exposing Soviet disinformation directly to audiences around the world. The group developed "a road show" that it could take to foreign governments and journalists. Several members of the Active Measures Working Group, including Kux, would give presentations describing Soviet disinformation activities and point out the falsehoods or tell-tale signs of forgery in each case.¹⁵⁶ One participant called these trips "truth squads."¹⁵⁷ The first, led by Kux in spring 1983, included stops in Morocco, Italy, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya. Another two went to Latin America and South Asia.¹⁵⁸ Visiting six countries in 8 days, the exhausted group learned that it would have to pace itself. In the future, they averaged about two countries a week.¹⁵⁹ The group would travel on the weekend and then spend Monday being briefed at the U.S. Embassy. On Tuesday, they would brief the host country's intelligence services on active measures in the morning, and then conclude the day by making presentations to journalists and doing local press interviews.¹⁶⁰ They would travel to the next country on Wednesday and repeated the process on Thursday and Friday, traveling again on the weekend. Over the course of five or six such trips, the working group managed to get to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Kenya) and Asia (New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea).¹⁶¹

Generally, these visits were well received, but some posts were leery, expecting a "red under every bed" spin. Kux was aware of these sentiments and was effective in disarming such skepticism for two reasons. First, as he later stated, "the fact that we made a credible presentation—not an ideological show—lent a certain amount of professionalism to the whole effort."¹⁶² Second, as Kux also noted, people "don't like to be duped. Not only were we telling them they were being duped but we told them how."¹⁶³ It was easy for the Soviets to disseminate disinformation in the developing world because the populace was inclined to believe conspiracy theories and journalists were easily bought. However, Europe was susceptible as well (particularly Italy for some reason) and the team went to NATO headquarters for an annual meeting on active measures.¹⁶⁴ The working group's traveling road show served a prophylactic purpose, sensitizing foreign intelligence services and journalists to be on the lookout for disinformation and thus increasing the cost of doing business for Soviet disinformation specialists. It also increased awareness among U.S. officials overseas and led to more reporting on disinformation from the CIA, USIA, and State.

The group's next Foreign Affairs Note on Soviet expulsions published in January of 1983 made an even bigger splash in the media than the first and also drew comments from the Soviet media. Material used in Foreign Affairs Notes was taken from unclassified sources, which made coordination easier. These products also used direct quotations from Soviet sources, which some surmise the Soviets found particularly galling.¹⁶⁵ After the *Economist*, *Washington Times*, and

Christian Science Monitor ran stories on the topic, the Soviets reacted.¹⁶⁶ TASS and *Pravda* called the reporting “Spy-mania” and a “U.S.-orchestrated course of confrontation.”¹⁶⁷ The Soviets tried to discredit the working group and the motives behind the reports rather than directly refute the evidence. After a few press conferences pursuing this tack unsuccessfully, the Soviets fell silent.

Kux and the group realized early on that the key to exposing Soviet disinformation and forgeries was preserving the group’s unimpeachable record of accuracy and trustworthiness. This was driven home by an incident at one of the group’s early press conferences. According to Kux, a well-informed and well-placed TASS official gave their analysis a “factual shellacking.” It was, he stated, his “bleakest day in the Foreign Service.”¹⁶⁸ Chastened but not discouraged, Kux realized that maintaining high standards was as important as enthusiasm for tackling disinformation. From then on the working group made a point of making sure all its public denouncements of Soviet disinformation were solid enough to “get a grand jury indictment” (that is, to demonstrate there was probable cause to believe something was actually “disinformation,” and that the Soviets were behind it).¹⁶⁹

It became standard practice for every forgery case to be examined with clinical detachment and thoroughness. The team looked first at the quality of the document, realizing that the Soviets were quite professional whereas others such as the Libyans or mere cranks were not. If the document was up to Soviet standards, they would look for tell-tale errors. Despite the general professionalism of Soviet forgers, it was not easy for them to get every detail precisely right. For example, the forger might be working from older documents that did not reveal the most current Department of State cable numbering system or classification acronyms (“tags” in State lingo). Also, the Soviets sometimes “slipped up when transliterating place names, using a non U.S. spelling.” Finally, the team “considered the message and who the target was. With the Soviets, this was usually fairly obvious, fitting in with their current propaganda campaigns.”¹⁷⁰ If after a thorough review of all the details, the working group thought it could make its case to an impartial panel of judges, it would expose the forgery.

Some of the disinformation cases that the working group investigated were easy, and others were complex and politically sensitive. An example of the latter was the use of Soviet forgeries to attribute blame to the United States for the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II by Mehmet Ali Ağca on May 13, 1981. The Soviet forgeries of cables from the U.S. Embassy in Rome, which emerged in July 1983, were excellent. Kux noted in retrospect that identifying their origin as Soviet was quite difficult.¹⁷¹ The group “had to take the fake telegram apart by pointing out the technical mistakes.” One indicator was the transliteration of the word “Brasilia,” which was done in a way that suggested that it had been translated from

Russian. The Embassy in Rome moved immediately to counter the damage from this case of Soviet disinformation, and the working group followed up by exposing the forgeries in a special report in September 1983.¹⁷²

The need for caution and high standards also was evident from a mid-1983 attempt by Soviet sympathizers to discredit the working group, which by this point was beginning to achieve some notoriety. In July, the group discovered a report of a bogus conversation between Reagan and Margaret Thatcher that made the British prime minister look bad. The group noted the taped conversation was a fake in a press conference in late July and mentioned it again in a report in September. They were on the verge of going to Marvin Kalb of CBS and linking the story to Soviet disinformation but held back because they were not confident it was Soviet disinformation since the target was Thatcher rather than Reagan.¹⁷³ They were glad they did when, on January 25, 1984, the *Washington Post* reported a confession from the British rock band Crass, who admitted they had made the tape in their recording studio.¹⁷⁴ The musicians claimed it was a hoax to discredit Thatcher and the Active Measures Working Group. It is not clear that the Soviets were involved in the hoax, but the incident at least suggested how much the disinformation fight had penetrated the public consciousness and served as yet another reminder to the working group on the dangers of speculation beyond what might be reasonably extrapolated from available evidence. Even so, the working group soon found itself embroiled in an even more serious disinformation controversy.

The problem began when the Israelis forged a transcript of a meeting purportedly between Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and the Saudi government concerning the sales of M-1 Abrams tanks. The forgery was “very, very well done.”¹⁷⁵ The Israelis gave the transcript to Mayor Ed Koch of New York City, a nationally known supporter of Israel, who wrote to Weinberger demanding an explanation for some of the promises made in the forgery. DOD had no idea what to do with Koch’s letter and turned to the Active Measure Working Group. Kux called a Koch aide whom he happened to know and learned that the Israeli Consul General had given the forgery to Koch.¹⁷⁶ The FBI field office in New York, on its own volition, paid a visit to Koch seeking further information about how he received the fabricated transcript. Incensed, Koch began corresponding with the director of the FBI, claiming Secretary Weinberger was attempting to deny him his constitutional right to comment upon matters of national policy.¹⁷⁷ The *New York Times* ran a story on its front page about the contretemps.¹⁷⁸ The attention the story generated and the political sensitivity of Israeli disinformation made the case radioactive. When the working group prepared draft press guidance for the State Department spokesman, Kux recalled, “We were basically told to ‘go away and shut up.’”¹⁷⁹

The case taught the working group that high evidentiary standards of proof only provided so much protection; some cases were politically explosive irrespective. Kux's attitude was that all forgeries targeting the United States should be exposed, but politics sometimes dictated otherwise. The case was not unique; reportedly, other allies also were guilty of forgeries affecting U.S. interests that went unchallenged.¹⁸⁰ The case was also a sober reminder that agencies (in this case the FBI) could act independently on information from the group rather than working out a course of action within the group.

The limits of high evidentiary standards were also apparent in the working group's relations with other offices in State and CIA. The group received support from leaders in some geographic offices, such as Palmer and Peck, but other regional specialists worried that exposing disinformation would upset bilateral relations.¹⁸¹ In their view, the value of countering the disinformation required a political assessment of likely effects, so they kept close tabs on the group. Soviet specialists in particular were skeptical about the group's work. They generally considered the working group a sop to political appointees and a real distraction that siphoned off resources better used for "serious work."¹⁸² Such skepticism and bureaucratic resistance could easily have stymied the group's work, but it was able to avoid this fate for several reasons.

The first reason the group did not succumb to bureaucratic blockage was Kux's leadership. He worked to accommodate specific concerns expressed by other offices and to ensure at least passive support from senior officials in State. The second factor was the presence and direct support of influential Reagan administration officials who took a personal interest in the group's efforts. Lenczowski, for example, who became a personal advisor to Eagleburger when he moved up from assistant to under secretary of State, went to working group meetings, and his presence and encouragement pushed the group to be more active.¹⁸³ He notes that "Since I didn't owe my allegiance to the Department [of State], because I was a political appointee, I was able to stretch the boundaries of what was acceptable politics."¹⁸⁴ Other group members agreed, noting they followed Lenczowski's lead because he could speak with authority for the new administration.¹⁸⁵ Senior political appointees like Lenczowski effectively communicated the proactive and confrontational attitude of the Reagan administration, so group members knew there was political pressure to overcome routine coordination challenges among their respective organizations, and also political cover for the group's work.

The third factor was the dedication of the working-level participants in the group and the fact that they represented so many departments and agencies. The expertise in the working group grew over time. As member expertise increased, so did commitment to the group's work. The fact that the group represented many national security organizations ultimately inclined it to be more activist.

Once the group decided on the most appropriate response to any particular case of disinformation and worked through any classification issues, it could act with the assurance that comes from a broad consensus. In addition, the organizational diversity helped ensure that no one member could be dismissed as a zealot. Several group members believe DOD participation was particularly helpful in this regard. Defense representatives with a background in psychological operations were naturally inclined to think “influence” operations were important. They were also career military officers and civil servants, so their support could not be dismissed as “right wing political extremism.”¹⁸⁶

Yet another factor inclining the group toward an activist posture was positive feedback. Friendly foreign government sources were applauding the group’s work, which inclined Hertzberg’s office director and veteran Soviet watcher Robert Baraz to begin calling the praise from U.S. Embassies for the Foreign Affairs Notes “FAN-mail.”¹⁸⁷ Soviet irritation was taken as another sign of success. Toward the end of Kux’s tenure, the Soviet media paid homage to the group’s work by specifically denouncing it for the first time. The World Peace Council, long recognized as a Soviet front group, was orchestrating a “Peace Assembly” in Prague to say “no to nuclear weapons in Europe.”¹⁸⁸ Hertzberg and Wallace Spaulding wrote a Foreign Affairs Note about the assembly and what could be expected from it given Soviet control of the sponsoring organization.¹⁸⁹ The Soviets made a point of ridiculing the report during Moscow Domestic Television’s coverage of the event:

*Chronic liars from the State Department apparatus distributed this pamphlet of lies on the eve of the assembly. It has its origins in the State Department’s bureau of Public Affairs. The pamphlet says that this assembly represents a gathering of communists but only communists who, they say, got together here in order to support Soviet foreign policy versus U.S. foreign policy. It says here that this assembly was allegedly set up by the World Peace Council and the Czechoslovak Communist Party which are controlled by and from Moscow.*¹⁹⁰

The report from the “chronic liars” was accurate, so the Soviets could only emphasize the large and diverse attendance at the assembly (1,843 national organizations from 132 countries were represented) and defend their political front group by trying to discredit those who exposed it. The working group interpreted the unprecedented Soviet response as evidence that its products were having an effect.¹⁹¹

Despite such circumstantial evidence of the group’s impact, Kux believed that the entire effort was best understood in the context of a long-term contest. In a televised interview for a

documentary on Soviet active measures, he argued the problem was cumulative and enduring: “One way to look at these active measures, which have gone on for many, many years, since the 1950s . . . is to think of drops of water falling on a stone. Over five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes, one hour, one day nothing happens, but five years, ten years, fifteen years, goes by and you’ve got a hole in the stone.”¹⁹²

Kux’s long-term view of the significance of active measures acknowledged that there were seldom “knock-out” blows in the information-disinformation contest with the Soviet Union. This line of reasoning emphasized the need to mount a sustained effort to ward off the cumulative effects of Soviet disinformation, but at the same time avoided making too much of it, which State liked. Kux also ensured that the group remained focused on disinformation (outright lies) rather than propaganda (persuasion) and that it exposed Soviet lies not in an “ideological” but in a “professional” fashion.¹⁹³

Collectively, this approach to countering Soviet disinformation made the working group more tolerable to State. Even after Kux’s departure, his successors would evaluate Soviet disinformation as a long-term, marginal problem¹⁹⁴ best countered with a “non-polemical” style.¹⁹⁵ This approach persisted in part because Kux helped institutionalize it. In a major coup, Kux managed to get Lawrence Eagleburger, the under secretary of State for political affairs, to put his name on an article explaining the need to counter Soviet active measures and the right approach for doing so.

Published in both *NATO Review* and the *Department of State Bulletin*,¹⁹⁶ the article rejected a “ho-hum,” “everyone does it” approach to Soviet active measures and explained the U.S. Government view that it was important for free societies to confront and expose Soviet disinformation. Eagleburger stated that “it is as unwise to ignore the threat as it is to become obsessed with the myth of a super Soviet Conspiracy manipulating our essential political processes,” but also insisted that Soviet use of active measures was a regular instrument of Soviet foreign policy and “an indicator of underlying hostility.” As such, “active measures should remain a cause of concern to the alliance,” and “conversely, the cessation of these activities would remove a significant obstacle to improved relations.” The article codified State’s approach to countering active measures, which included “effective counterintelligence,” “persistent and continuing” exposure, and “the highest standards of accuracy.” Eagleburger’s public support softened institutional resistance in State to countering disinformation, and made it U.S. policy that improved U.S.-Soviet relations required Soviet restraint on active measures.¹⁹⁷

In summary, the short-term net effect of the group’s substantive work might have been uncertain, but its bureaucratic achievement was much more evident. By the end of 1983,

the Active Measures Working Group was firmly established as an action-oriented group committed to its mission and able to overcome bureaucratic resistance. The working group attracted experts who felt their work could make an impact in the escalating information war with the Soviet Union, which complemented and overlapped with other Reagan administration efforts to pressure the Soviet Union (see textbox 6). For these analysts, used to producing internal reports that never garnered public attention, the group's work and the attention it received were invigorating. They and other working group members had built up competence in the basic functions of the group. They had developed professional standards, an operational rhythm for truth trips, and a number of responsive and well-received reports. These bureaucratic and substantive achievements were unusual for an interagency working group, and other organizations took note of the group's success. There was even some speculation that CIA and USIA wanted to take charge of the working group.¹⁹⁸ However, Kux had it firmly rooted in the Department of State, and its foundation would prove strong enough to carry the group and its activities forward through the period of uncertain leadership following his departure.

Momentum Carries the Working Group: 1984–1985

In January 1984, Dennis Kux left INR and the Active Measures Working Group. After 3 years, the State Department moved him to another assignment as part of its normal rotational cycle.¹⁹⁹ His absence was immediately felt. The group “was a little rudderless” without him,²⁰⁰ and its productivity decreased (see figure 1). Lenczowski, who was well respected by the group, provided a sense of continuity and dynamism after Kux left, but he could not devote a large portion of his energies to the effort.²⁰¹ In INR, there was some indecision about which of the deputy assistant secretaries should oversee the working group. William Knepper, an INR deputy assistant secretary, ran it for a couple of months, but he was a Latin America and economic expert and happy to hand it off.²⁰² Tom Thorne eventually replaced Kux as deputy assistant secretary for coordination, but he was not much interested in active measures or interagency coordination. By the summer of 1984, he had delegated responsibility for chairing most of INR's working-level interagency committees—including active measures—to Lucian Heichler, the director of the Office of Coordination. Heichler was a senior Foreign Service Officer (an FSO-1, or the highest rank just below Career Minister and Career Ambassador), who was intelligent, collegial, and respected by the group. He had been a member briefly under Kux's leadership but otherwise came to the effort without the benefit of active measures expertise.²⁰³ He also had less clout than Kux, being an office director rather than a deputy assistant secretary.

Textbox 6. Able Archer 83: Strategic Miscommunication?

Cold War historians believe that the United States and Soviet Union came to the brink of nuclear war during a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military exercise in the fall of 1983.¹ In retrospect, the incident seems to have been a case of strategic miscommunication. President Ronald Reagan's strategy for U.S.-Soviet relations was codified in National Security Decision Directive 75,² summarized simply by one knowledgeable participant as "Win the Cold War!"³ The strategy directive required stronger U.S. military and intelligence capabilities, confrontation with the Soviet Union in the "war of ideas," and other steps to pressure the Soviet Union to make changes to its internal political system. For example, to retard an already handicapped Soviet economic system, the Reagan administration fed flawed products to Soviet agents stealing Western technology so that "contrived computer chips found their way into Soviet military equipment, flawed turbines were installed on a gas pipeline, and defective plans disrupted the output of chemical plants and a tractor factory."⁴ The Reagan strategy also required adroit strategic communications to convince Moscow "that unacceptable behavior will incur costs that would outweigh any gains" and that restraint "might bring important benefits for the Soviet Union."⁵

From the beginning, however, strategic communications were complicated by misperceptions on both sides. In the months following Reagan's inauguration, his administration launched covert operations and "strategic psychological operations"⁶ to demonstrate U.S. resolve and capabilities. The operations were a series of naval and air probes near Soviet borders that were so sensitive "nothing was written down about it, so there would be no paper trail."⁷ Every few weeks, the United States sent bombers over the North Pole to probe Soviet airspace and test radar defenses, and in September 1981, an 83-ship battle group of U.S., British, Canadian, and Norwegian ships managed to traverse the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap undetected using advanced deception techniques. Planes from the group ran combat air patrols and launched simulated attacks on Soviet reconnaissance planes attempting to locate the U.S. carrier heading the battlegroup.

The United States assumed that the Soviets understood that these exercises were demonstrations of what the Nation could do, not necessarily what it would do—after all, the Soviets conducted similar military maneuvers. However, these edgy operations drove home the point that Soviet technical means for detecting a first strike were significantly inferior to those of the United States and reinforced Soviet concerns that an increasingly capable

Textbox 6. Able Archer 83: Strategic Miscommunication? (cont.)

America could win a preemptive war. After a few months of such activity, Soviet leaders such as General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and KGB head Yuri Andropov apparently believed Reagan's "anti-Soviet" campaign rhetoric was not just hyperbole but rather a reflection of a real desire to build and execute a nuclear first-strike capability.⁸ They ordered a massive intelligence effort that had Soviet agents scouring the world for early warning of U.S. intentions and capabilities for a nuclear first strike. Code-named Operation Ryan (Ryan being the Russian acronym for "nuclear missile attack"), the Soviet collection effort relied in part on the openness of Western society to help the KGB track the locations of senior Western leaders as an indication of whether they were situated to conduct nuclear war.

After a couple of years of give and take in these matters, a series of developments escalated tensions. In March 1983, President Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative to protect the United States from Soviet missiles, which raised Soviet concerns that the United States was interested in capabilities that would allow it to strike first with impunity. Then in September 1983, the Soviet Union blundered and shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007 when it approached Soviet airspace, driving up animosity and belligerent rhetoric between the two superpowers. Shortly after the Korean Air Lines tragedy, NATO's training exercise, Able Archer 83, took place. During the exercise, NATO high-level military and civilian leaders went to secure locations. Even the U.S. President and Vice President made cameo appearances in the simulation. Communication volume increased with new codes in use, and several installations dropped into radio silence. As the exercise continued, NATO forces went to DEFCON 1 (the highest defense readiness alert posture, generally indicating nuclear war is imminent), and then the exercise concluded with a simulated release of nuclear weapons.

Similar exercises had been conducted before, but given the unusually tense atmosphere, the Soviets reacted as if they believed the exercise might be a prelude to a nuclear first strike. They armed their bombers and took other steps to improve nuclear readiness such as putting their missiles and air assets in East Germany and Poland on alert. The crisis passed with Western observers oblivious to Soviet reactions. Later, however, a British agent inside the KGB (Oleg Gordievsky) warned the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) that the Soviets genuinely thought the United States was preparing for preemptive war, and the British passed this intelligence on to counterparts in the United States.⁹

Textbox 6. Able Archer 83: Strategic Miscommunication? (cont.)

To this day, opinions differ as to how seriously the Soviets took the threat of a U.S. first strike. Some simply assert that “the United States does not do Pearl Harbors,” which should be self-evident. Others think that Soviet leaders genuinely believed the United States was interested in a first strike; if so, perhaps they were victims of their own propaganda since the KGB forged multiple documents with the theme that U.S. leaders such as Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger wanted a first strike against the Soviet Union. Others, who defined Soviet strategic deception largely as an attempt to “get their lies on the President’s desk,” were skeptical. Perhaps Soviet leaders were just exaggerating the extent to which Able Archer brought both sides to the brink of nuclear confrontation. At the time, they were doing everything possible to use fear of nuclear war to derail the impending deployment of new U.S. intermediate-range theater nuclear forces in Europe that could hit Soviet targets in under 6 minutes. A U.S. National Intelligence Estimate at the time concluded that Soviet posturing during the incident was “more propaganda than threat perception,”¹⁰ but since then, some well-informed observers have concluded otherwise.

In any case, the apparent Soviet reaction “scared the hell out of Reagan”¹¹ when he learned about it and “convinced him that he had pushed the Russians far enough.”¹² To the consternation of some of his advisors, the President adopted a more conciliatory tone in his next speech. He also pursued arms control negotiations in his second term more assiduously when Mikhail Gorbachev, intent on political reform, emerged as the supreme Soviet leader. They exchanged strategic communications on a personal level based on the perception that each was “a man you could do business with.”¹³ Thus, the balance between Cold War cooperation and confrontation in Reagan’s strategy for U.S.-Soviet relations shifted in his second term.

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 227–228.

² National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 75, January 17, 1983, available at <www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-1958t.gif>. The directive was actually implemented from the advent of the administration.

³ David Major, interview with authors, May 5, 2011.

⁴ Guss W. Weiss, “Duping the Soviets: The Farewell Dossier,” Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Studies in Intelligence, available at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/index.html>>. One knowledgeable source indicates these efforts resulted in a massive explosion of the Trans-Siberian pipeline. See Thomas C. Reed, *At the Abyss: An Insider’s History of the Cold War* (New York: Presidio Press Book, 2004), 268ff.

Textbox 6. Able Archer 83: Strategic Miscommunication? (cont.)

⁵ NSDD 75.

⁶ Melvin A. Goodman, *Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 151–152. Goodman does not specify the covert operations, but notes that those in Eastern Europe particularly concerned Moscow.

⁷ Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), 8.

⁸ Benjamin B. Fischer, “A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare,” *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, available at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/a-cold-war-conundrum/source.htm>>. The account here is largely taken from Fischer’s excellent analysis.

⁹ Goodman, 151.

¹⁰ Fischer. Another senior Reagan official has noted that even as late as 1985, Gorbachev “was still being advised that any real agreement with Reagan would be impossible and that the only prudent course for the Soviet Union was to continue its confrontational policies until U.S. allies woke up to the dangers and pressed Reagan or his successor to act more rationally.” See Jack F. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 154.

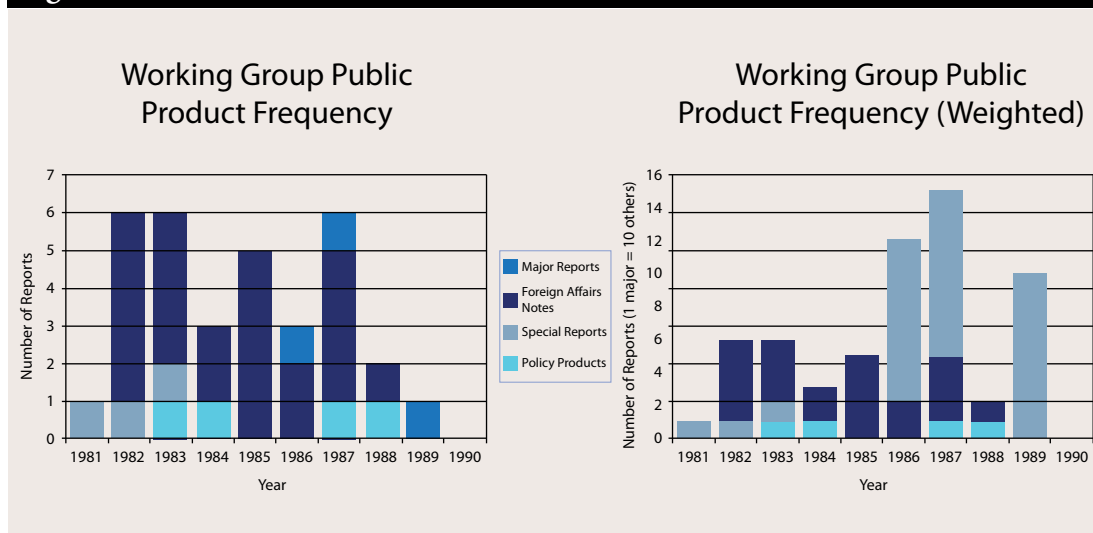
¹¹ John Lenczowski, interview with authors, March 11, 2011.

¹² Gaddis, 228.

¹³ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 405.

In the little under 2 years that Heichler led the group (January 1984 to the fall of 1985), he played an effective managerial role and used the substantive abilities of the other members of the group to good effect.²⁰⁴ In this regard, Herb Romerstein, who moved from his congressional staff position to USIA in 1983 to head that organization’s new Office to Counter Soviet Disinformation, was instrumental. Romerstein constantly took new members under his wing, tutoring them on the fine points of Soviet active measures. His network across the U.S. Government was unparalleled and extended overseas as well, allowing him to help Heichler continue the truth-squad presentations. With collegial leadership, a firm foundation of activities and methods in place, and knowledgeable and committed individual members, the group was able to carry on and even rack up additional noteworthy successes.

For example, the group scored a major victory against the KGB only a few months after Heichler took over. The Soviets wanted revenge for Carter’s boycott of the Moscow Summer Olympics in 1980. Since the United States had not invaded any countries in the runup to the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, the KGB manufactured a public relations crisis. In July,

Figure 1.

KGB officers forged letters from the Ku Klux Klan that threatened athletes from African countries and mailed them from Washington, DC, to these countries' Olympic committees. The forgeries caused an immediate stir, and the working group was under pressure to expose them. Grammatical errors pointed to a Russian language origin, but the working group could not say with certainty that the letters were Soviet forgeries. Then the group received an intelligence coup. One of the FBI's sources in the KGB had participated in the production of the letters and confirmed their origin.²⁰⁵ The working group had its smoking gun but could not use it as evidence for fear that it would compromise the KGB source and lead to his death.²⁰⁶ The group came up with ways to protect the source, and the FBI eventually approved the release of some of their source's sensitive information. The Active Measures Working Group was then able to report conclusively that the letters were Soviet forgeries, which allowed USIA and State to reassure the targeted African countries. No African country withdrew their athletes from the Los Angeles games.

The group also continued to produce Foreign Affairs Notes, thanks to David Hertzberg, who wrote almost all of them. The State Department published the year-end Foreign Affairs Note on the expulsion of Soviet officials on time, and translated it into Spanish, French, and Arabic. The working group followed up with a message to all overseas posts advertising the document and noted that the "interagency Working Group on Active Measures" would appreciate "suggestions on how the FAN Series can be made more effective, including suggested topics."²⁰⁷ Over the next 6 months, the group published three more Foreign Affairs Notes on

front group gatherings. United States Information Service Germany distributed 13,577 copies of one of these publications in both German and English to German youth organizations, union officials, state governments, the media, and academic institutions during the runup to the Soviet-sponsored 12th Youth Festival in Moscow that summer. The report received positive reviews from all over Germany. One official in a youth organization wrote:

*This report greatly expanded my knowledge about the work of the Soviet Union's front organizations and offered me an effective tool for my political work in the Jung Union of Germany. I can only characterize as especially positive the efforts the United States is taking to counteract Soviet Propaganda. Your efforts against the artificially exaggerated "anti-Americanism" cannot be emphasized enough.*²⁰⁸

Such positive feedback encouraged the group and also helped insulate it and the Department of State more generally from criticism that publicizing Soviet disinformation was a distraction from more important issues.²⁰⁹

In the fall of 1985, members of the working group testified in hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs. The active measures briefing team consisted of Heichler, Romerstein, and two other USIA officials: Pete Copp, policy officer on Soviet Disinformation, and Stanton Burnett, the highest ranking career civil servant in USIA. The group gave the Senate the truth-squad presentation for the first time on American soil. Their presentation capped 2 days of hearings where the CIA and FBI reported on their efforts and Thomas Thorne (the working group's erstwhile supervising deputy assistant secretary in INR) summed up the Active Measures Working Group's record. In 4 years, the group had produced 20 unclassified documents (mainly Special Reports and Foreign Affairs Notes),²¹⁰ coordinated a number of sessions with interested journalists, visited over 20 foreign countries to sensitize embassies and foreign countries to active measures, and ensured that overseas posts were kept informed of active measures and had priority assignments to report possible forgeries that occurred.²¹¹

In short, the group was still producing reports and conducting truth-squad trips under Heichler as it had under Kux. Even so, the energy and political support for the group began to wane. For one thing, competing activities took the spotlight off of the group. In part because of the challenge the Soviets mounted to NATO's theater nuclear force modernization, the Reagan administration decided that public diplomacy efforts needed to be more tightly integrated by the White House. The process began more than a year before Kux left, but its effects on the group's activity were not really felt until after his departure.

CIA Director Casey transferred Walter Raymond, a CIA public diplomacy and active measures expert, to the NSC in 1982. Raymond was tasked with building up the executive branch's ability to coordinate public diplomacy. He worked on drafting National Security Decision Directive 77 (NSDD 77), which was issued by the President in January 1983. NSDD 77 set up a senior planning group, chaired by Raymond, and four interagency subgroups that would coordinate different aspects of public diplomacy.²¹² On December 15, 1983, as part of his wider public diplomacy effort, Raymond started another interagency group called the Soviet Political Action Working Group. Raymond's group had a broader purpose than the Active Measures Working Group. Its objectives were twofold: "to contain and counter Soviet political initiatives around the world" and "to promote the process of change within the Soviet Union."²¹³ This first objective overlapped with that of the Active Measures Working Group. However, the second objective gave the group an activity set that veered away from simply countering active measures into actually implementing active measures against the Soviet Union—something the Active Measures Working Group assiduously avoided. According to some with first-hand knowledge, the classified working group's activities could be highly effective—"stunning programs" that "boggled the mind."²¹⁴

This classified NSC working group became a major outlet for the more aggressively action-oriented members of the working group at State. Lenczowski, who had recently moved to the NSC as director of European and Soviet Affairs, Steve Mann of the State Department's Soviet Bureau (also assigned by INR's Soviet office to keep an eye on Kux's working group), and Romerstein were in attendance at the NSC group's first meeting.²¹⁵ Romerstein quickly took advantage of the more permissive operating environment. He was tasked with producing an action paper with Levchenko that would "take the offensive and make [the Soviets] pay the price for these initiatives."²¹⁶ The group would revisit the Romerstein and Levchenko work at their next month's meeting.²¹⁷

People who attended both the classified NSC and unclassified State working groups on Soviet active measures helped ensure that there were no conflicts between their respective activities.²¹⁸ Sometimes the NSC group would give filtered material to the unclassified group to handle, but it also countered Soviet active measures directly or would find a foreign intelligence organization to manage the issue in question.²¹⁹ Initially, some of the NSC group's members occasionally came to meetings of the unclassified group to provide encouragement, but by 1985 their attention was elsewhere.²²⁰ With the INF deployment successfully resolved in Europe, the classified active measures working group at the NSC was turning its attention to Latin America. Reagan's reelection seemed to give them more latitude to address left-wing advances in Central America, and these highly classified activities became the main show for many of the Reagan political appointees who previously had supported State's group.

Another disadvantage for the Active Measures Working Group after Kux's departure was the leadership transition at State. During Reagan's second term, Secretary of State George Shultz began a changing of the guard at the assistant secretary level. One of the assistant secretaries slated to leave was Hugh Montgomery, a former CIA official and assistant secretary in charge of INR. Montgomery reportedly had been favorably inclined toward the working group. Shultz named Morton Abramowitz, a career State Department official, to replace him. This raised fears among conservatives that Shultz was preparing a purge of some of the more committed Reagan political appointees and that once State was firmly under Shultz's control, it would act as a moderating force and curtail DOD and CIA influence over foreign policy.²²¹ For their part, many career officials at State viewed Abramowitz's confirmation as a test of whether he was willing and able to use his clout to protect career officers from political recriminations. Abramowitz's first nomination as Ambassador to Indonesia had been derailed by opposition from DOD, CIA, and congressional conservatives. Career Foreign Service Officers considered this political revenge for implementing Carter's policies.²²² Abramowitz's confirmation was held up until the end of 1985 by Republican Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC).

Meanwhile, Heichler decided to retire from the Foreign Service in the fall of 1985. Other than the Active Measures Working Group, he was not finding his work in INR challenging, and he decided to take advantage of a new State Department retirement program.²²³ About the same time, Deputy Assistant Secretary Thorne left for another opportunity (though he would later return to INR). With Montgomery, Thorne, and Heichler gone, and Abramowitz's confirmation still on hold, the group did not have a chairman, deputy assistant secretary, or assistant secretary interested in it or looking out for it. During this period, the group was headed by a series of Foreign Service Officers who assumed the title of acting office director while the INR leadership situation was sorted out.²²⁴ Reagan appointees wanted the working group to continue its work, but in the meantime, they could counter Soviet disinformation via the classified working group at the NSC.

From the Department of State's point of view, the Active Measures Working Group was too well established and successful to mess with but too dangerous to leave unsupervised. Heichler's departure left State with little moderating control over more conservative influences such as Romerstein and Lawrence Sulc. Sulc was a former CIA Clandestine Service official who was interested in leading the group after being appointed as a deputy assistant secretary in INR.²²⁵ Romerstein, Sulc, and others were eager to bring up topics such as Soviet sponsorship of terrorism and Soviet deception on nuclear arms control. State, some CIA officials, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which now had a member on the group, feared that without some sort of check on the group, it would veer off in directions that could damage private diplomacy, intelligence collection, and arms

control negotiations.²²⁶ To prevent that, State was happy to let the group languish in leadership limbo until the chain of command issues at INR were resolved.

Sulc got his appointment as a deputy assistant secretary of State for INR in 1985. However, he was not given Kux's old position as deputy assistant secretary for coordination. Instead, he was made deputy assistant secretary for interdepartmental affairs in the INR—apparently a position with few formal responsibilities.²²⁷ Sulc never got to run the Active Measures Working Group, but he collaborated with others to elevate the profile of the group's activities and ensure that they were sustained. Congressman Newt Gingrich (R-GA) is a case in point.²²⁸ Gingrich shared Sulc's belief that countering Soviet influence and active measures was a vital part of confronting Soviet power. He argued that the Soviet Union "has a very large and elaborate network for disinformation and the Soviets spend a lot of time trying to think through how can we deal with manipulating the American press."²²⁹ He also believed the documents captured by American forces in Grenada revealed the true face of communism and lamented the fact that the American press and academia had not paid more attention to them.²³⁰ To help correct the situation, in 1985 he sponsored an amendment promoting a permanent office in the Department of State on "Soviet and communist disinformation and press manipulation" to better inform the American public on these issues.²³¹ With Sulc's encouragement, he also added an amendment to unrelated legislation stipulating that State must produce a public report on Soviet active measures.²³²

Having sponsored the requirement for a public report on Soviet active measures, Gingrich took a personal interest in the working group's efforts. Stanton Burnett, the second highest official in the USIA and a participant in some of the working group's meetings, remembers running into Gingrich by accident while waiting for a flight at National Airport. He was surprised that Gingrich remembered him from some previous meeting, and even more surprised when the Congressman grilled him on the political views of the group. Gingrich left Stanton with the impression that he did not trust career civil servants but that he personally was interested in the working group's success.²³³

In the winter of 1985–1986, the Department of State broke free the Abramowitz appointment as assistant secretary for INR in part by agreeing to take another Reagan political appointee aboard in INR to run the Active Measures Working Group. State assuaged the concerns of the congressional conservatives and Reagan officials by accepting Kathleen Bailey as a deputy assistant secretary in INR. In accepting the moderate Bailey as a Reagan administration political appointee, State blocked the hardliner Sulc from running the working group and moving it in unhealthy directions.²³⁴ With INR's three deputy assistant secretary positions already filled, State allocated an additional position for her, but it was worth the effort.

Thus, political maneuvering delayed the working group's leadership transition for months and also earned it a congressional mandate to provide a public report that would be a major preoccupation of Bailey's after she arrived in INR to assume duties. Since the working group had been leaderless for so long, Bailey took over under the impression that she was essentially starting the counter-disinformation effort from scratch. She was aware that there were experts on Soviet active measures but thought they represented an informal association rather than a functioning working group.²³⁵

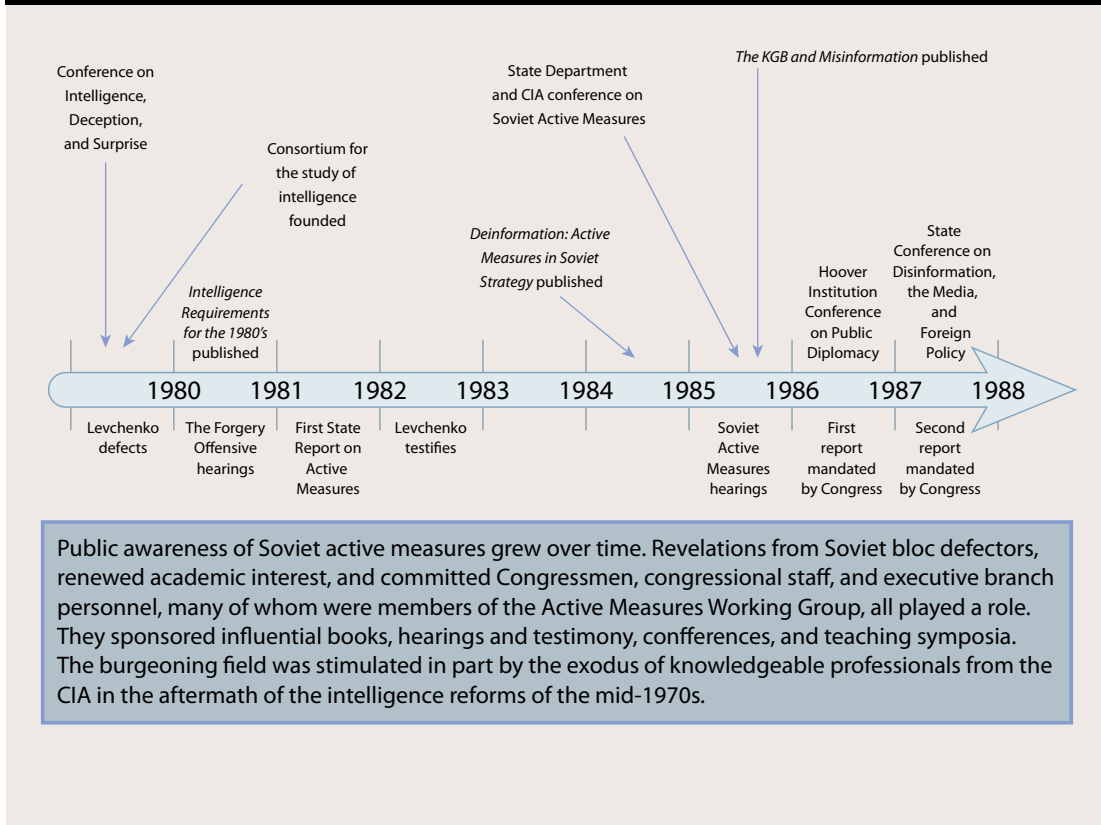
The Apogee of the Active Measures Working Group: 1986–1987

When Kathleen Bailey took the helm of the working group, she had both a major advantage and disadvantage. The disadvantage was the lack of respect she received from many of the working group members.²³⁶ She did not have the type of expertise they prized, came from a different background, and was a woman in a position of authority.²³⁷ However, over time, she won the confidence of virtually all the group members. The advantage she enjoyed was that the importance of Soviet active measures was reaching its apex in several respects. First, far from being deterred by the new U.S. resolve to expose their depredations, the Soviets increased their use of forgeries and launched some major new disinformation campaigns, such as attributing the origin of the AIDS virus to Pentagon germ warfare programs.

Bailey's arrival also coincided with the decision by some of the activists most interested in countering Soviet active measures to give the subject greater public exposure. In addition to the legislative requirement to produce a public report on Soviet active measures, members of the working group got involved in a major conference set up by Raymond's NSC working group and designed it to stimulate academic interest in Soviet active measures.²³⁸ The conference took place just before Bailey took over leadership of the group in July. Romerstein, Malzahn, and Copp participated in the Department of State–CIA sponsored conference at Airlie House along with big names from academia and notable Soviet defectors such as Ladislav Bittman and Levchenko. There were no high-ranking government officials there to kick off the event with a “your work is important” welcoming speech. The purpose was to advertise Soviet active measures to the public. The working group distributed copies of the conference report overseas through USIA posts to promote understanding of Soviet disinformation (see figure 2).²³⁹

Thus, Bailey took control of the group when increasing public awareness of Soviet active measures was a major objective for many—particularly meeting the requirement for a congressional report. When Bailey first entered the office of her new boss, Morton Abramowitz, he implicitly noted the political dimension of the counteractive measures agenda. Looking up from reading her resume, he commented that he was glad the White House had sent him

Figure 2.



someone with substance rather than a partisan politico. Bailey had a doctorate in political science,²⁴⁰ extensive contacts in the Intelligence Community,²⁴¹ and, most importantly, had just spent 2 years at the USIA as deputy director and then acting director of the Office of Research, which was responsible for gauging foreign public opinion on U.S. policies and tracking Soviet propaganda. While at USIA, she had developed an appreciation for the role of public diplomacy as well as a wide array of contacts that would help her lead the Active Measures Working Group.

Abramowitz gave Bailey four responsibilities, the last of which involved responding to what would soon be referred to as the “Gingrich report.”²⁴² He handed Bailey the legislative language requiring a report from State on Soviet active measures and asked her to coordinate and prepare the report. Bailey was familiar with active measures, particularly disinformation, from her 2-year stint at USIA, but set out to learn more. She used her Intelligence Community contacts to obtain briefings and materials on Soviet active measures. She also accepted recommendations that she

interview Levchenko and other experts on Soviet active measures, including Romerstein. Romerstein agreed to serve on her working group and help with the Gingrich report, and he suggested others she should recruit. Over the next few weeks, Bailey put together a list of the people and agencies that would be most useful in preparing the report, relying extensively on David Hertzberg for advice and Sheldon Rapoport for assistance in reaching out to the others.

Putting the report together was difficult. Bailey had to lead the working group through innumerable debates over what material was most important, what could be declassified, and how best to present it. As the group's activities expanded and became more public, declassification of material became more important, and Bailey fought hard to get the best material included in the report.²⁴³ INR strictly abided by declassification procedures, so nothing was used publicly unless the group agreed to declassify the material. Even so, CIA and FBI participants cleared in advance any information they gave the group, typically at the assistant director-level in their offices. Bailey and the group labored for almost a full year and successfully delivered the report on time using a small budget drawn from different INR accounts. In August of 1986, she printed out *A Report on the Substance and Process of the anti-US Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns*,²⁴⁴ put it in a binder, and hand-delivered it to Congressman Gingrich in his office, where photos of the two were taken.²⁴⁵ The report was made public in early October, close to President Reagan's summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland. Some Department of State officials objected to its release during the runup to Reykjavik,²⁴⁶ but their concerns were overcome.²⁴⁷

To the working group's surprise, its first public report proved to be a media sensation. The report generated hundreds of requests from the public and media for copies. When its success was evident, State came up with more money for a reprint with better graphics and production value. Congressmen complimented the report and made it clear that they wanted more of the same. They asked whether it would be necessary to pass legislation to assure a followup report in 1987.²⁴⁸ Meanwhile, President Reagan used the publicity the report generated as an opportunity to order the State Department to institutionalize its counteractive measures capability.²⁴⁹ CIA Director Casey and Kenneth deGraffenreid at the NSC actively supported the idea.²⁵⁰ Gingrich was also pleased, noting in October 1986 that "the most significant aspect of the [1986] report is that we now have set up an office to monitor disinformation and active measures and it begins to establish the principle that we're going to be aware that some of the reports that the media receives may be active measures. It gives people a place to go to check things out."²⁵¹

Thus, Gingrich's reporting requirement, the quality of the resultant report, the positive response it generated, and high-level supporters in the administration all combined to ensure that

counter-disinformation would be institutionalized for a season in State, but the Department was not happy about the development. Abramowitz in particular was identified in the press as someone opposed to the new office. However, the President's intervention left him little choice but to go along with the plan.²⁵² The Soviets also were not happy. Almost on cue, they attempted to discredit the new office, publishing a story in TASS entitled "USA: Misinformation Bureau Established." Evidently, the Soviets confused the small new office in State with the working group, noting that the new organization's real activities, which would be to "discredit and besmirch critics of Washington's policy," were indicated by its membership: INR, NSC, the Pentagon, CIA, FBI, and USIA.²⁵³

Bailey's organizational span of control had expanded suddenly. She remained chair of the Active Measures Working Group, but now was also in charge of the new INR Office of Disinformation, Analysis and Response (with the INR internal designation of AMANR: Active Measures Analysis and Response).²⁵⁴ The office consisted of two staffers, including the INR analyst David Hertzberg, and a secretary.²⁵⁵ It was headed by Donald Sheehan, a Polish- and Russian-speaking career Foreign Service Officer with experience in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Sheehan became available to Bailey on a normal rotation back to Washington, DC.²⁵⁶ Even though Abramowitz reportedly was not happy about the office dedicated to countering active measures, he had promised Bailey that she would have complete freedom of action in running the group, and he kept that promise.²⁵⁷

Besides working on the report to Congress, Bailey took overseas trips to counter Soviet disinformation, which was increasingly affecting perceptions of the United States in Third World countries. She led teams to Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, making a point of always taking an interagency delegation. Bailey provided an overview and then turned to other team members to make presentations on more specific issues.²⁵⁸ In addition to briefing embassy staff on active measures, the teams also engaged in public diplomacy with local media. On these trips, she heard that U.S. Embassies needed material to combat local Soviet influence. For example, she was told that the Soviets were generating hostility because their fishing trawler fleets were depleting local fish supplies. So the working group did a report on the topic for distribution in West Africa.²⁵⁹

The working group also continued its stream of Foreign Affairs Notes responding to current events that were related to Soviet active measures, including its annual report on the latest expulsions of Soviet officials. As the fishing and expulsion examples illustrate, some of the working group's efforts were not actually countering Soviet disinformation so much as exploiting opportunities to embarrass the Soviet Union or expose its influence operations (just as the Soviet Political Action Working Group in the NSC and another at DOD did, only with different

material and methods²⁶⁰). However, the group also kept up its analysis of front groups in the peace movements and recent anti-American forgeries.²⁶¹ All told, group output was now at an all-time high.

Over the next year (1987), the working group continued to operate at a high level of productivity. It continued to publish Foreign Affairs Notes and hold briefing trips, and it followed up participation in a successful 1986 conference on public diplomacy sponsored by the Hoover Institution by organizing yet another conference, but one specifically designed to educate American journalists.²⁶² Previously, group members had taken U.S. media personalities aside privately to sensitize them to Soviet active measures. By now, the group and topic carried a high enough profile that they could simply invite a wide range of journalists to a conference—and they came. However, the subject of Soviet influence on U.S. media was still sensitive enough that the journalists' names were not made public in the subsequent conference report. The conference took place in May 1987 (again at Airlie House) and was titled "Disinformation, the Media, and Foreign Policy."²⁶³

There was a great deal to share with journalists. Six years of countering disinformation had not yet decreased Soviet willingness to fabricate documents and stories detrimental to U.S. interests, including forgeries that targeted senior U.S. officials up to and including the President. President Reagan's name was used in Soviet forgeries throughout the 1980s, the last one appearing in May 1987. This last forgery was supposedly a memorandum from the President to the Secretaries of State and Defense and the director of the CIA, that ordered the establishment of a U.S. military force called the "Permanent Peace Forces" that would be used to intervene in Latin America. This forgery received wide circulation in Latin America and inflamed nationalist and anti-American feelings. United Nations Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Secretary of State Weinberger were also targeted. A 1982 Soviet forgery purporting to be a transcript of a speech made by Kirkpatrick that called for the balkanization of India was planted in the Soviet-influenced Indian press and kept circulating until 1986. Another Soviet forgery surfaced in the summer of 1986 that was supposedly a transcript of a speech given by Secretary Weinberger on the Strategic Defense Initiative. No such speech was ever given, but the forged transcript had Weinberger stating that the Strategic Defense Initiative would give the United States superiority over the Soviet Union and allow it to win a controlled nuclear first strike. It went on to claim that the United States would use this power to coerce the Soviet Union and prevent "unfavorable" developments in NATO so the United States could continue to control Europe.²⁶⁴

As the working group (and others) stimulated public awareness of Soviet active measures, the Soviets had an incentive to keep their hand in such activities better hidden. They did not,

however, stop propagating outrageous lies. In January of 1987, they launched a disinformation campaign aimed at convincing people that the CIA had perpetrated the November 1978 mass suicide at Jonestown, Guyana.²⁶⁵ They also ran false allegations of U.S. development and use of biological weapons, and that the United States was importing Latin American children, butchering them, and using their body parts for organ transplants.²⁶⁶ These stories ran repeatedly in the Soviet press and were picked up worldwide.

Even though the Soviets showed no signs of reducing their disinformation efforts, the working group remained convinced that its efforts were a necessary and helpful response. As Todd Leventhal put it: “If they could spread nasty lies about us in the Third World and smile at us in front of the camera, and we didn’t call that incongruity into focus, they could have gotten away with it. But we didn’t let them get away with it. Our strategy was to let people know the nasty things they were still doing. It hurt them in the eyes of the Western media.”²⁶⁷ Thus, as the Soviets kept producing forgeries and other forms of disinformation, the Active Measures Working Group kept exposing them.

In August of 1987, the working group published its second annual report on *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986–1987*.²⁶⁸ This report, as well as a Foreign Affairs Note published the month before, focused on the Soviet disinformation campaign on AIDS. Both came out within a few months of a high-level U.S.-Soviet summit in Moscow, which some State officials found less than propitious. Gorbachev felt the same way. The working group’s second annual report was the one that Gorbachev complained about to Secretary Shultz and that received so much media attention as a result. Since Shultz did not back off when confronted, Gorbachev had no reason to believe the United States would desist from exposing Soviet disinformation. By implication, the United States would stop exposing Soviet lies only if the Soviets would stop telling them. Presumably, Gorbachev and the new generation of Soviet leadership forming around him were uncomfortable with the resultant negative public relations and diplomatic fallout.²⁶⁹ In November, a month after the summit, Soviet scientists disavowed the AIDS campaign in official Soviet media outlets, and soon thereafter, the Soviets agreed to cooperative measures to reduce the likelihood of inflammatory and inaccurate public media messages detrimental to U.S.-Soviet relations.²⁷⁰

In retrospect, the period of Bailey’s leadership was the high-water mark for the Active Measures Working Group both in terms of volume of output and ostensible impact. The group’s efforts had captured the attention of the media, Congress, and policymakers and drawn apologies from the Soviet Union. The group was having a disproportionate impact, far exceeding the costs of manning the group, producing its reports, and promoting its road shows overseas. The

costs of the small interagency working group stood in stark contrast to the gargantuan disinformation effort mounted by the Soviet Union, which involved hundreds if not thousands of people.²⁷¹ Unlike so many other Reagan administration intelligence and public diplomacy initiatives guided by small interagency groups, the Active Measures Working Group worked well and quickly. To determine why and assess the extent to which the working group might be a model for emulation by other small interagency groups, it is necessary to examine more deeply the attributes that typically explain high performing cross-functional, interagency teams.

Analysis of Variables Explaining Performance of Active Measures Working Group

We use 10 separate variables drawn from organizational and management literature on cross-functional teams to assess the origins of working group's performance (see table 2).²⁷² The variables are distinct enough to merit their own analysis, but they are not mutually exclusive. They overlap and interact in ways that we identify. In addition, they can be grouped according to the breadth of perspective they represent. Three are organizational-level variables: purpose, empowerment, and organizational context; four we consider as team-level variables: structure, decisionmaking, culture, and learning; and finally, three variables are individual-/team member-level issues: team composition, rewards, and leadership.

Organizational-level variables describe the context and boundaries of the effort and, in effect, its direction. Team-level variables describe how the group operates within that context and how it shapes and reacts to its environment. Individual-level variables address the extent to which the working group participants and their backgrounds and skills account for team performance. In the following sections, we provide a brief explanation of each variable and assess its importance in explaining the success of the Active Measures Working Group. We focus on understanding the working group's performance during the period when Bailey chaired it between 1986 and 1988. This period provides the richest insights into the group's performance because it was its most public and productive period. In addition, with only one notable exception, all the major members who served under Bailey were available for interviews.²⁷³ When possible and relevant, we compare and contrast the working group's experience under Bailey and Kux. We also identify variables that changed over time when there is sufficient evidence that such changes significantly affected performance.

Organizational-level Variables

Small interagency groups, like cross-functional teams, are partly products of the larger organizations or systems they are drawn from. The group's organizational milieu can have a major impact

Table 2.		
Level	Variables	Defined
Organization	Purpose	the broad, long-term mandate given to the team by its management, as well as the alignment of short-term objectives with the strategic vision and agreement on common approaches
	Empowerment	access to sufficient high-quality personnel, funds, and materials, and an appropriate amount of authority that allows for confident, decisive action
	Support	the set of organizational processes that connect a team to other teams at multiple levels within the organization, other organizations, and a wide variety of resources needed to accomplish the mission
Team	Structure	the “mechanics” of teams—design, collocation, and networks—that affect productivity
	Decisionmaking	the mechanisms employed to make sense of and solve a variety of complex problems faced by a cross-functional team
	Culture	the shared values, norms, and beliefs of the team: behavioral expectations and level of commitment and trust among team members
	Learning	an ongoing process of reflection and action through which teams acquire, share, combine, and apply knowledge
Individual	Composition	what individual members bring to the group in terms of skill, ability, and disposition
	Rewards	material incentives and psychological rewards to direct team members toward the accomplishment of the mission
	Leadership	the collection of strategic actions taken to accomplish team objectives, ensure a reasonable level of efficiency, and avoid team catastrophes

on group effectiveness. For example, when a small interagency (or cross-functional) group is formed, some higher authority typically defines the group’s purpose with varying levels of specificity. Often at the same time there will be some guidance about whom the group answers to, what authorities the group has, and what sort of resources—human, material, and informational—it will command. Depending on the broader organization’s approach to teams, there will also be varying levels of support provided for the team. These organizational-level variables—purpose, empowerment, and support—are typically the most basic and earliest determinants of a small group’s performance.

Purpose. Research on teams often concludes that there is an advantage to allowing teams to identify their own specific objectives, but some guidance on what the team is supposed to accomplish is necessary.²⁷⁴ However, the guidance can come from different sources. In the case of the Active Measures Working Group, the external guidance that came to Kux was quite broad. In essence, he was simply told to look into ways to counter Soviet active measures. Moreover, as one member notes, the topic was inherently hard to define and amorphous; it “really ran the risk of just becoming a talking forum and eventually dying off.”²⁷⁵ However, after looking into the matter and perhaps feeling reinforced by the predilections of his State colleagues, Palmer and Peck, Kux determined that the group would counter Soviet disinformation with concrete products rather than just policy statements and that those products would avoid any tendency to exaggerate the Soviet threat. To create such products the working group would “combine the information from USIA posts around the world, CIA reporting, and FBI investigations.”²⁷⁶ Thus, the working group and its products would have to be an interagency effort. Kux, the working group’s first leader, defined its purpose, but that definition would not go unchallenged over the life of the group.

The loose and informal mandate for the formation of the working group left the door open for a continuing debate within the group over the scope of its activities. For some, typically representatives from State’s regional bureaus, only the most egregious Soviet lies should be exposed, and then only when doing so would not conspicuously embarrass U.S. allies whose citizens might have been duped or used by the Soviets. Others believed the group should be more aggressive and move beyond its concentration on exposing forgeries.²⁷⁷ They wanted to expose all Soviet disinformation that could be sufficiently documented and also expose Soviet influence operations if that would make them less effective. Finally, Romerstein and others wanted unrestricted political warfare, going after the Soviets any way possible so long as U.S. interests were served and the truth was communicated. These differences of opinion over the mission did not prevent the group from getting out products, but they ensured a continuing debate over what the group should be doing.

Disagreement over the group’s purpose, or scope of activities, can be traced back to the term *active measures* itself. It was a politicized and ill-defined term when the group was founded, and the activities covered by active measures were debated, sometimes contentiously. As the historical review offered earlier illustrates, State and CIA, for different reasons, wanted the term defined more narrowly. For these organizations, countering active measures meant countering egregious lies and covert influence operations when the United States could prove and expose them without risk to political relationships or intelligence sources and methods. Others de-

defined active measures much more broadly to include overt propaganda, covert action, strategic deception, and other types of political warfare, all of which needed to be countered wherever possible and as best would serve U.S. interests. Many who preferred this broader understanding of active measures adhered to the traditionalist view of intelligence and were committed anti-communists. Working group members with this broader view included some (but not all) Reagan political appointees and USIA officials such as Romerstein and Leventhal.

Since for most of its history the working group was under State's leadership, the scope of its activities remained limited to the narrower view. The group was under pressure from committed anti-communists such as congressional staffer Anthony Codevilla to be more aggressive. Codevilla accused the group of being too tame and threatened to have his Congressman write a letter to the FBI complaining about the group's lack of aggressiveness.²⁷⁸ Romerstein "was more realistic" about what the group could do, but nonetheless he frequently pushed for more aggressive activities.²⁷⁹ Others in State and elsewhere exerted a countervailing pressure to remain "non-polemical." Under Kux and Bailey, who benefited from deputy assistant secretary status, these differences of opinion were muted. Both made it clear that they would limit the activities of the group to the narrower definition of scope and to keeping the group's products easily defensible.

The group's direction was not a foregone conclusion. The Iran-Contra investigation would later reveal that a similar group created in the Reagan administration went much further afield, creating its own forgeries and actively trying to influence U.S. public opinion.²⁸⁰ Political sensitivities also played a large role in defining the scope of the group's mission and, thus, its purpose. Certain topics, such as U.S. journalists being paid, Soviet influence activities in allied countries, and allied disinformation against the United States, were deemed too sensitive and too close to the U.S. policy process for the group to deal with.

The direction the group took was reinforced over time by its success with its chosen activity set and by the creation of the more classified Soviet Political Action Working Group at the NSC. The classified group could take on sensitive activities that the group operating out of State could not review, much less manage. As one member who attended both groups noted, the NSC group had much more information, some of which was quite sensitive. In reviewing the broader picture, it could decide to give material to the State group to use, or it could use the material itself, or it could pass the information to a foreign intelligence agency to use in countering Soviet disinformation.²⁸¹ With the NSC group up and running in 1983, there was less reason to push a more aggressive agenda through the Active Measures Working Group.

Different opinions about the strategic scope of the working group's activities did not prevent the group from building a consensus on a basic set of tactics (as codified by the group's

Report-Analyze-Publicize methodology). Under Kux's leadership, and with senior leader political support, the group agreed on a basic approach (or a "strategic concept") for organizing its activities that persisted over the course of the group's history. Conceivably, the group's strategic concept could have changed under Bailey, who initially was not familiar with the group's earlier track record and who had been given a specific task to accomplish by Abramowitz. She noted that she "was tasked to help with the 1985 Gingrich Report requirement" and that she "pulled together an interagency group to get this done."²⁸² However, under her leadership, the group's direction and products did not change much.

Given the consistency in the group's approach, it is not surprising that many members said the main purpose of the group was "clear" and that the goal of countering disinformation "made sense."²⁸³ The members had a "common interest" in exposing and fighting active measures that "took precedence over protecting rice bowls" (that is, organizational turf).²⁸⁴ Knowing its activities were deemed important by senior members of the U.S. Government all the way up to the President reinforced commitment to the group's purpose. Many career civil servants who served on the group noted that the manifestly high-level political support for the group's activities reinforced their belief that their work was important as part of a larger effort to reset U.S.-Soviet relations.²⁸⁵ In turn, the belief that the work was vital motivated the group to work hard.²⁸⁶

Empowerment (Authority and Resources). It might seem to be a matter of common sense to observe that a group requires adequate authority and resources to perform well, but often they receive neither—particularly in government where resources for new missions are scarce and a new group's mission can run up against many previously established authorities.²⁸⁷ The Active Measures Working Group received no explicit authorization or resources to conduct its activities. Bailey's position as a deputy assistant secretary in State entitled her to respect but gave her no special directive authority over any group members other than the one or two members of INR who reported directly to her. Bailey recalls that she made it a point to get to know the supervisors of her group members in order to improve the chances that they would be encouraged by their agencies to participate in a productive manner: "With the CIA and FBI, in particular, it was highly beneficial to convey to them appreciation for their peoples' input."²⁸⁸

On the other hand, Bailey (like Kux and Heichler previously) was given a large amount of autonomy to find a way forward for the group.²⁸⁹ She recalls, "I was given full free reign by Morton Abramowitz [who] did not micromanage and I had final authority on all input . . . nobody of higher rank peered over my shoulder."²⁹⁰ Under different circumstances, this amount of autonomy could have resulted in isolation and a reduction of informal authority if group members

had decided to ignore her instructions. However, the representatives of the departments and agencies sitting around the table realized Bailey represented a Reagan administration priority effort. There was a general sense that obstinacy and obstructionism would warrant higher level intervention. This recognition helped suppress resistance from group members sent to “monitor” the group’s activities and make sure they did not run counter to the parent organization’s equities. They still raised objections, however. Bailey noted that she would receive phone calls from officials in other agencies protesting her decisions and requiring compromise.²⁹¹

Similarly, the working group had no mission-specific resources. The group drew on the part-time contributions of existing experts and in-place INR analysts to cover manpower costs. The members had no budgets beyond the normal travel and public affairs accounts controlled by their bosses. Bailey had to work with the Department of State’s public affairs bureau to glean bits of cash from different budget pots to print the working group’s first report.²⁹² The initial product was personally generated by the working group members. The first Foreign Affairs Note was circulated in much the same way; David Hertzberg and Peter Knecht hand-stuffed and mailed envelopes with the report themselves.²⁹³ The resource situation quickly improved after the first report was so well received. Congressmen, U.S. Embassies, and USIA posts sent requests for follow-on briefings, and Bailey was able to ask for and receive more travel money to support those efforts. She also had no trouble finding money to reprint the first report in grander style or to print the second report, and she was able to secure three personnel slots for the new office she created to institutionalize the working group in INR (that is, AMANR).²⁹⁴

But material resources played only a peripheral role in the success of the Active Measures Working Group. The crucial resource required by the group’s mission was information. Here too the group was constrained. Normal classification requirements were an impediment to information-sharing. One USIA employee with a lesser clearance would occasionally have to leave the room. But the more difficult issue was getting parent organizations to declassify information so that it could be used in working group products, which of course needed to be unclassified to serve the group’s purpose. A certain amount of information on Soviet active measures was available from preexisting communication and intelligence channels monitored by State, but as one member noted, “this was before the Internet.” Thus, the collection and aggregation of the data about Soviet active measures was a primary activity. In addition, the group increased information flow by requesting that overseas posts be on the lookout for it. In this regard, the working group helped generate as well as consume information. But a great deal of the best information had to be volunteered by members and be declassified by

the members through their organizational channels. As a general rule, members vetted with their parent organizations what information they would share with the group beforehand, and certainly before declassifying such information.²⁹⁵ Here again, however, the widespread recognition that the working group's mission was supported by senior administration officials helped, inclining organizations to declassify material whenever possible. For most working group members, classification issues really were a matter of protecting sources rather than an excuse not to contribute.

As the working group began to build a record of success, that record emboldened the group and reinforced the commitment of its members, which is referred to in organizational literature as "psychological empowerment." From the beginning, successfully exposing and defeating instances of Soviet disinformation brought the group closer together, diminished resistance among those inclined to question the group's purpose, and reinforced the commitment of those for whom countering disinformation already "made sense." Working group members almost invariably enjoyed working on the group, calling the experience fun,²⁹⁶ "very satisfying,"²⁹⁷ or, for one, "the best part of my career."²⁹⁸ Others remember how a notable success would always energize the group. Jim Milburn from the FBI recalled, "We really came together on the KKK forgeries in May of 1984. The group got a lot of good exposure in national news stories. It was one of the few times what I did there was in the news."²⁹⁹ By the time Bailey was in charge, the working group's activities carried a higher public profile and were more likely to elicit direct Soviet responses. When the Soviets groused about the group's reports, Bailey said it was a topic of glee at their meetings. The group thought "We were really making these guys think twice. It made us feel effective."³⁰⁰ And when Gorbachev complained to Secretary Shultz about "our report . . . it was very exciting and made you want to do it again."³⁰¹

Organizational research concludes that there is a correlation between psychological empowerment and overall team performance, which the Active Measures Working Group experience corroborates.³⁰² The notion that group member commitment increases as their collective efforts prove efficacious stands to reason. The converse may be just as true but less evident to some observers. Many members of the working group commented on the deadening effect of having to work on other interagency groups that bore no fruit. The Active Measures Working Group's efficacy was all the more psychologically empowering because it was unusual. Many of the working-level participants recounted that they were drawn to the group by a chance to see their work make a definitive and recognized impact on world affairs. This gave the working-level participants a stake in the group's continued existence and the overall group a lot more energy and endurance. Having committed members was a boon to Bailey, who could appeal

to that sense of commitment when she had no directive authority to command extra effort to ensure good group performance.

Organizational Support. The most common recurring causes of team failure are rooted in lack of support from the broader organization (or in this case, the national security system). It is difficult for teams to operate successfully in an organizational context that undermines the autonomy of the team process and does not reward experience on the team.³⁰³ When teams are formed, they typically are given some sense of their placement within the larger organizational apparatus, formal relationships, and informal reporting or coordination requirements. If not, they must soon explore and discover what those relationships are. In some large organizations, teams are treated like experiments and largely left alone to see if they can fend for themselves. Typically, this is not a recipe for success. In others, they are housed in a standing functional bureaucracy that will provide minimum forms of support: a place to meet, basic operating funds, some administrative support, and so forth. Yet again, some organizations have made a conscious decision to be team-oriented (so-called team-based organizations), and they provide extensive support as a matter of policy and design.³⁰⁴

The Active Measures Working Group was a typical small interagency group in the U.S. national security system. It was placed in one of the national security system's standing elements—the Department of State—where it received a minimal amount of support from that organization and was largely left to fend for itself against bureaucratic impediments. It is important to remember that many midlevel managers in State, CIA, and FBI were reluctant to support the Reagan-era information warfare efforts. DOD officials found that they had to be meticulous when preparing their *Soviet Military Power* reports because the CIA saw it as an encroachment on their mandate to provide unbiased intelligence on Soviet capabilities and would pounce on any inaccuracies to discredit the effort.³⁰⁵ The CIA's directorate of operations would not share the information it collected on Soviet active measures with the analytic side of the CIA—even though the information was critical for assessing Soviet capabilities and intentions—until the Agency was reorganized by the Reagan administration. The FBI was also reluctant to share what it knew about Soviet active measures in the United States because it did want to get ahead of policy and risk another scandal like COINTELPRO.³⁰⁶

Similarly, in State and USIA, as previously explained, many did not want to dignify Soviet disinformation with a response.³⁰⁷ However, it is worthwhile explaining State reticence in greater depth. Foreign Service Officers were aware that the United States conducted its own classified political action and information operations, and many thought it would be counterproductive to initiate a tit-for-tat exchange with the Soviet Union over whose political influence activities

were the most egregious.³⁰⁸ Also, many Foreign Service Officers felt that public diplomacy hindered or even subverted their private diplomatic proceedings.³⁰⁹ In particular, many regional offices in State worried that exposing Soviet active measures would embarrass U.S. allies and cost the United States political support. Finally, State's Soviet specialists were not convinced Soviet disinformation had much effect. They believed the working group was forced on State for political reasons, and they kept close watch on its activities, considering it a "foreign body" that needed to be isolated and controlled if not eliminated.³¹⁰

For all these reasons, several offices in State sent representatives to the working group to keep tabs on its activities over the years,³¹¹ including the Soviet and East European office in INR.³¹² Those in State who wanted the working group disbanded were dubbed the "Black Knights" by members of the working group,³¹³ and it took sustained vigilance from the group's leaders to ensure they did not have their way. Jim Milburn, an FBI representative to the group, admired State leaders who had to swim against the bureaucratic tide: "I really take my hat off to the guys at State who had to fight those battles there. . . . Kux, Hertzberg and later Bailey had to fight against the idea that we were giving the Soviets too much credit."³¹⁴

The wary eye cast toward the group and the minimum in tangible support offered to it by the national security bureaucracy were not unusual. What was unusual was the support the working group received from many senior leaders in the Reagan administration, a level of interest that significantly helped the group overcome bureaucratic resistance to countering Soviet disinformation.³¹⁵ The group had at least passive support from key figures in State during Reagan's first term. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger, and Assistant Secretary for INR Hugh Montgomery all agreed the group should be stood up.³¹⁶ Beyond State, there was even more enthusiastic support for the team. USIA Director Charles Wick "loved it."³¹⁷ Moreover, he provided practical support through his "Z-grams" to USIA posts encouraging them to "pay attention to Soviet anti-American disinformation," which many were not otherwise inclined to do.³¹⁸ CIA Director Casey also took a personal interest in the group's activities.³¹⁹ Kenneth Adelman, the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, sent an official to participate in the group because he was personally interested in the topic.³²⁰ DOD and DIA, and those in the Office of the Secretary of Defense responsible for psychological operations in particular, provided members and contributed enthusiastic support. High-ranking DOD officials such as Fred Ikle, General Stillwell, and Brigadier General Walter Jajko were highly supportive. Other Reagan administration officials such as Kenneth deGraffenried, and later David Major and John Lenczowski, brought the NSC's blessing and encouragement.³²¹

Don Sheehan, who worked for Bailey and then became the chair of the group, remembers that the working group “was a popular organization with the administration,” and “no one got into any trouble for doing it [countering active measures] because they read the signs correctly.”³²² Sheldon Rapoport, a long-time group member, illustrates the impact of senior leader attention when recalling an in-house retreat that the group organized during Heichler’s tenure as chairman, a period when the group was without a deputy assistant secretary to lead it. During the retreat, Winnie Joshua [DIA, Soviet Division] and John Lenczowski from the NSC showed up to participate. The unexpected addition of these senior officials was invigorating: “there was a sense of engagement and involvement. There was a sense that we were doing something important.”³²³ More generally, the group benefited from regular senior-level attention. Another attendee, Stanton Burnett, who had numerous small interagency group experiences, notes that “When a lot of principals can’t make it the [interagency] group loses a lot of self importance. The [Active Measures] working group was never like this. It was empowered and felt like they would be heard.”³²⁴

All told, the sustained interest and support demonstrated by attendance and representation on the working group from senior Reagan administration officials was sufficient to motivate the working group members and forestall any overt attempts by other parts of the bureaucracy to prevent the group from pursuing its mission. Even during the second Reagan term, after Shultz replaced many Reagan appointees, senior State leaders did not interfere with the group; for most of them, it was considered a peripheral activity.³²⁵ Other leaders more directly aware of the group’s activities knew that it had avoided major missteps and enjoyed a good reputation. The record of success reinforced support from senior officials already inclined to be supportive, and disinclined those who were not from standing in the way of the group’s progress. As one senior attendee noted, there was a general sense that those manifestly opposed to the group would likely receive “career counseling phone calls.”³²⁶ Whether this was true or not, the perception that the working group had such support cleared the way for Kux and his team to establish an action agenda and, buttressed by the group’s record of success, pursue it for over a decade.

Team-level Variables

We consider team structure, decisionmaking, culture, and learning to be team-level variables because, unlike organizational-level variables, they are typically the factors most immediately under the control of the team. Team-level variables are shaped by the team and determine how it operates. They are often the most salient characteristics to the casual observer because they regulate day-to-day operations and performance. Team-level variables are often shaped by

organizational-level variables such as team purpose (and individual-level variables as well), but these variables represent the leverage points a team can most easily change to improve performance. In the case of the Active Measures Working Group, team-level variables did not prove to be as important as they have for other interagency groups we have reviewed.³²⁷ In part, this is because the group was not structured for maximum performance.

Structure (Location, Size, Tenure, Networking). Team structure refers to the “mechanics” of teams—design, collocation, and networks—that affect productivity. Research shows that effective teams are designed to tackle specific tasks, are small (typically fewer than 10 people and no more than 20), collocated, and have a strong internal and external communications network. The Active Measures Working Group was not collocated and members did not serve on it full-time. The group began and was maintained as a standard interagency working group, a number of representatives from different organizations sitting around a conference table periodically and discussing an agenda put together by the chairperson. During its most productive periods, the group met once a week at best, and after meetings, members returned to their parent organizations and, in most cases, to other duties besides those occupying the working group. This is not to say that during periods of peak productivity the members did not work hard. Particularly under Bailey when public reports were expected, the members had to especially devote themselves to the working group tasks: “The group was most productive when a task was at hand. They were consumed with the work.”³²⁸ But even during these periods of intense activity, the group was not working shoulder-to-shoulder, day-in and day-out. Consequently, there was not as much time for the group to develop distinctive decision-making, cultural, and learning attributes.

The group compensated for these deficiencies by organizing well for the group task. A set of methods and products was established early on, including the RAP method, the “grand jury indictment” standard, and activities, including Foreign Affairs Notes and truth-squad trips. These activities and methods constituted a “shared mental model” of sorts that was passed along over the years because the core membership of the group enjoyed a degree of continuity. The turnover of the group’s leader and its executive secretary is illustrative in this respect. Bill Young served Kux initially as executive secretary, and when he left, Sheldon Rapoport, his replacement, had the benefit of working under Kux for 6 months. Andrew Sheren, who replaced Rapoport, also had a period of learning before Rapoport left. Other members, such as Romerstein and Leventhal, would provide continuity across many years, while others attended the working group meetings during their normal office rotation periods of 2 to 3 years. However, there was a gap in leadership just prior to Bailey’s arrival that complicated the transfer of institutional

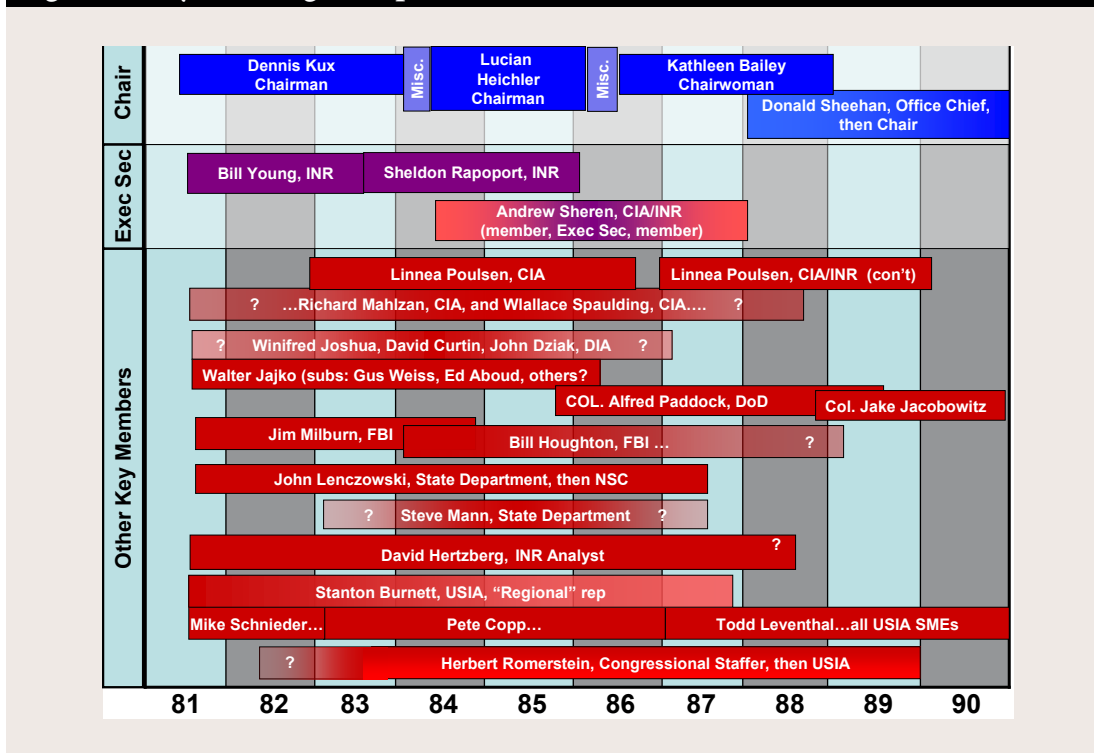
knowledge. While Rapoport recalls sharing minutes and products from earlier group meetings with Bailey, she was unfamiliar with some of the group's earlier terminology (such as the RAP method and grand jury standard) and experiences.³²⁹

Moreover, a clear distinction was made between people who could contribute a lot and those who only monitored group activities. Key contributors were respected; others were not. From the beginning, Kux tried to attract people to the group who were experts. Initially, the group was small and informal and made up mainly of those who could contribute plus a few "monitors" from other State organizations. Meetings typically included a maximum of 10 to 15 people. Over time, the group's success attracted additional members who were there either to be associated with the group's activities while providing the minimum of substantive contribution or to keep an eye on activities. One participant complained that "the bigger it was the less effective it got,"³³⁰ and others also viewed the unnecessary members as an impediment to the group's real work.³³¹ By the time Bailey took charge, the group consisted of about 20 people.³³² Bailey did all she could to ensure that regular attendees were people who could contribute substantively, but it was difficult to exclude offices that wanted to participate. She did not object to monitors being present because they could sometimes be useful. For example, if she wanted something from an agency or bureau, she could remind them that they had a seat at her table as a means of cajoling them.³³³

To her credit, Bailey did not allow the slight growth in membership to affect the group's reporting frequency and quality. She soldiered on with a business-like attitude, directing conversation and discussion to those who could contribute and keeping up the pace of work. She kept the group's pace and productivity up. Under her successors, the group's meeting frequency fell to monthly and sometimes bimonthly with an attendant drop off in report productivity.³³⁴ Weekly meetings increased the familiarity of the group members and made them all more comfortable with the rhythm of the decisionmaking process and its patterns of conflict and adjudication.

Another structural strength of the team that compensated for its lack of collocation and full-time commitment from members was the network of supporters maintained by the group. Some team members were embedded in well-developed and influential networks, and a core group of the working group members developed a strong internal network. Networks are the patterns of informal connections among individuals that have the potential to facilitate or constrain the flow of resources between and within teams.³³⁵ From 1983 on, the most salient network extended outwards from Romerstein, who played the role of an informal leader by virtue of his subject matter expertise and connections to other experts outside the group.

Figure 3. Key Working Group Members and Tenure



Romerstein's network was astonishing. It increased his influence and that of the working group. He had a knack for reaching out to others interested in Soviet active measures, including defectors and academic and former intelligence officials. He was a well-known participant in the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, led by Roy Godson, where he contributed to and benefited from discussions with the Nation's most knowledgeable intelligence practitioners and theoreticians.³³⁶ Romerstein maintained a regular gathering of such personalities at a Chinese restaurant on K Street in Washington, DC. Most of the attendees were partisans of the traditionalist school of intelligence such as John Dziak, Richard Shultz, and Ray Rocca.³³⁷ Throughout his years on the working group, Romerstein also kept up with his contacts on Capitol Hill and the NSC staff. He met regularly, for example, with deGraffenried and Major,³³⁸ and he would sometimes invite members of his executive branch network to group meetings.³³⁹ Romerstein also befriended defectors and often developed close relationships with them. He was a particularly good friend to Levchenko, even coauthoring a book with him at the end of the 1980s.³⁴⁰

Working group chairs were aware of Romerstein's connections but took them in stride for good reason. Romerstein did not use his high-level contacts ostentatiously; as one chair noted,

“no one ever put the muscle on me.”³⁴¹ Instead, he worked constantly to persuade his colleagues of his convictions, in the process building a strong internal network on the team. After meetings, he gathered together the “core members” of the group—those most respected for their substantive contributions—from the CIA, USIA, and INR to have lunch at the Tachibana, a Japanese restaurant in suburban Virginia. These informal meals allowed the dedicated members of the group to continue the discourse on active measures.³⁴² Romerstein did a lot of educating in such informal gatherings. He also used coffee breaks and hallway meetings for the same purpose, especially with higher ranking and busier members of the group. Stanton Burnett, who as the number two in USIA significantly outranked Romerstein, remembers that he frequently “had coffee with Herb” or “met in the corridors” where “the real questions, briefings, and framing of issues” was done by Romerstein.³⁴³ Romerstein’s external and internal networks ensured a constant flow of current expertise among members, and also allowed him to exert considerable influence on the group.

Romerstein, however, was not the only working group member with significant connections. Other members also could call upon networks to gain information and support. Bailey came to her leadership post with an extensive contact network in USIA, State, and throughout the Intelligence Community. Burnett also enjoyed a wide set of contacts within the Reagan administration. He had access to Pat Buchanan (White House director of communications) and regularly gave the Secretary of State his 8:45 a.m. briefing since Wick typically had more pressing business. Even lower ranking members of the group had impressive networks with other subject matter experts. For example, INR analyst Hertzberg enjoyed a good working relationship with Wallace Spaulding (CIA director of operations), who was the Agency’s foremost expert on communist front groups and running sources in these front groups.³⁴⁴ Overall, the working group enjoyed a high degree of network density and “embeddedness.”

Team Decisionmaking. Decisionmaking processes are employed to make sense of and solve a variety of complex problems faced by the team. Experts on team decisionmaking emphasize the importance of diverse viewpoints (that is, heterogeneous worldviews), well-managed team conflict, and improvisational and tenacious decision implementation processes for team effectiveness.³⁴⁵ When properly managed, conflict among heterogeneous worldviews can produce better and more informed decisionmaking and help to avoid “groupthink.” Eventually, conflict must be reduced to ensure effective action is taken. The challenge in team decisionmaking is allowing disagreement to improve decisions, but not so much that the team is unable to implement them. In the case of the Active Measures Working Group, the key decisions revolved around information: what information was sufficient to pin blame on the Soviets for a particular

case of disinformation, what information could be declassified and made public to respond to Soviet disinformation, and how the information could be best presented for maximum effect.

Information was so central to the working group that many members responded to queries about decisionmaking by stating that the group did not make decisions so much as it shared information.³⁴⁶ One participant stated: “Basically it brought together all the people in government who were working the issue for an exchange of ideas. None of these reports could have been done by a single agency. Meetings were an excellent process for sharing pertinent information across agencies with a variety of representatives who could all benefit from the information.”³⁴⁷

Another member described the group’s purpose as “getting intelligence, sharing info, and seeing your colleagues every 2 weeks. It was never boring; it was quality [time and information] and something to look forward to. It was a focal point for information sharing.”³⁴⁸ During periods of lower-ranking chairmen and lower productivity, the importance of information-sharing was accentuated since there was less wrangling over what to include in a product and how best to present it. However, during the periods of highest productivity under Kux and Bailey, there were clearly decisions to be made on what, when, and how information would be used to expose Soviet disinformation.

In this regard, the major faultline in group viewpoints was the assessment of how dangerous the Soviet Union was and thus how aggressive the group should be in exposing Soviet disinformation. Some (especially in State)—such as Hertzberg and his boss, Robert Baraz, the director of INR’s office for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—did not want to exaggerate Soviet power. They realized not only that the Soviet Union was a major nuclear power but also that it could barely produce effective tractors and sufficient toilet paper. On the other side were Romerstein and others, particularly in DOD, who viewed the Soviet Union as a greater threat.³⁴⁹ They focused not on structural deficiencies in the Soviet economy but rather on how effective the vast Soviet military and intelligence apparatus could be. Members recall the working group was generally harmonious, “but Herb was very passionate about whole thing, a bit contentious when he thought [the group was] not doing enough, not taking the threat seriously enough.”³⁵⁰

In the end, these differences were muted by several factors. First, parent organizations controlled the flow of classified information into public reports, so the group had to focus on what it could do with the information made available. Second, State’s leaders (career and political) kept the group firmly rooted in consensus by avoiding the most controversial topics. Seriously controversial issues such as strategic deception and Soviet support for terrorism never made it onto the group’s agenda or, if they did, never into its reports. As one member pointed out, State regularly noted that it was not the policy of the U.S. Government to undermine the legitimacy

of the Soviet Union, so the group stuck to countering Soviet disinformation and exposing Soviet influence efforts when possible.³⁵¹ Therefore, the issue was not content but classification and presentation.³⁵² Romerstein and others might have wanted to take on more controversial issues, but it was clear that other members would not support it and that the State chairs could not move in that direction. In the end, like most small interagency groups, the Active Measures Working Group had to proceed mainly on the basis of consensus.³⁵³

Members recall that decisionmaking under Kux was consensus-based. It was not an easy task to determine what was and was not a Soviet active measure. The group had to cogitate and discuss the issues, and “if someone had an objection you had to deal with it.”³⁵⁴ Bailey also noted consensus was preferred, but also recalls that she sometimes had to overrule individuals. Since there were both departmental differences and personal differences of opinion, Bailey had to determine which kind of objection she was contending with. Particularly in the case of Romerstein, who was the most opinionated member of the group, Bailey had to ask herself if the person was representing his department or just his personal views.

Organizational researchers refer to such interpersonal clashes as “emotional conflict.”³⁵⁵ From the beginning, there were issues with Romerstein’s persnickety nature. Kux often had to let Romerstein vent and then assure him that the U.S. Government would do all it could.³⁵⁶ Many members believe that Romerstein’s agitation was more pronounced when Bailey chaired the group, but he was always a sensitive personality. Even Romerstein’s admirers remember he “could be very ideological and . . . wasn’t very balanced in judgment. He was prickly, freewheeling, and could go off the reservation, but he was an expert.”³⁵⁷ Another admirer notes, “Herb did have a tendency to act like he was on a college faculty instead of working in Washington, DC, and didn’t always have perfect judgment as to which details were important. Understanding the subject was intrinsically valuable to him.”³⁵⁸ This type of emotional conflict was not so productive for the team, but the value of Romerstein’s substantive knowledge made up for the minor disruptions he generated. Everyone was eager to keep him in play and supporting the group. Typically, working group chairs treated him with deference, but sometimes Bailey felt that she had to stand up to him when he was being particularly unreasonable. If that led to Romerstein boycotting a meeting, as it did occasionally, someone would be dispatched to patch things over. Andrew Sheren often played this role, “meeting with Herb to try and bring him back into the fold.”³⁵⁹

Personal views could be overridden—with care—but department and agency views were less easily dismissed. Once when she was insufficiently sensitive to a CIA concern, she received a call from the CIA working group member’s superior, who essentially said, “you are not listening.” So

she had to go over to the Agency, listen to the concerns of higher-ups, and work it out. Rather than confront her in the meetings, the member had his superior make the phone call.³⁶⁰ Declassification was a difficult and time-consuming process (for example, at the FBI, information given to the group had to be cleared by the assistant director³⁶¹), but by far the most contentious issue for the departments and agencies was the question of how to evaluate the accuracy of one another's information when it conflicted. People would "get huffy" if the reliability of their input was questioned.

The natural way to resolve the issue of reliability was to consider the source and the method of obtaining the information, but of course the FBI and CIA were loath to reveal their sources because it could put them in jeopardy. So Bailey would have to ask gently, "could we get more detail here?" Sometimes the answer was yes, and the issue could be resolved. In other cases, the credibility issue could not be resolved without revealing the source of the information, which was an almost insurmountable problem. When such a stalemate occurred, Bailey simply preferred to cut the material. As a general rule, if she was not sure the information was rock solid, she edited the material out rather than risk being discredited later. This policy led to lots of deleted material, but fortunately—so to speak—the Soviets provided a lot of good material for the group to expose.³⁶² Bailey and the group also had to compromise with the regional and country desks at State when they argued that disinformation was not worth exposing at the risk of embarrassing people friendly to the United States.³⁶³ Here Bailey would fight harder to overcome political objections and get the material included, but concessions still had to be made.³⁶⁴

Over time, Bailey and the rest of the working group became better at managing both emotional and task conflict. Decision implementation was always a strong suit of the group. If declassification issues could be resolved, the group had enough talented writers that products could move forward. So although the group struggled for the better part of a year to get out its first public report under Bailey, it gained a lot of knowledge on group decisionmaking in the process. Within that year, Bailey became comfortable with her position as a political appointee and familiar with all the group members and their idiosyncrasies. She was able to forge consensus and had a better feel for when she could disregard objections.³⁶⁵ She improved productivity by collecting individual member contributions on floppy word processing disks and then editing and integrating them into a common product that all could review and comment upon (thus taking advantage of what at the time was a new technology).³⁶⁶ She stood up to Romerstein more frequently and became less sensitive to regional desk concerns compared to some of her predecessors.³⁶⁷ As a result, the decision conflicts that the group experienced were mostly productive, and when not, they could be limited so as not to interrupt production and dissemination of material.

Team Culture. Organizational culture is typically described as shared values, norms, and beliefs. On teams, strong organizational culture typically translates into higher levels of cohesion and trust among team members, which in turn contributes to greater team commitment and high team performance.³⁶⁸ One norm shared by Kux and Bailey was the expectation that the group would generate actions and products. The action-oriented climate did contribute to group cohesion by giving all the core members the sense that they were part of a meaningful enterprise. To be productive, the group required knowledge but also writing, presentation, and management skills. Competency in any of these areas was therefore valued.

Bailey believes that the group particularly respected members with knowledge.³⁶⁹ Romerstein is the obvious case in point, but other core members also were knowledgeable Soviet experts (on front groups, communist parties, and so forth) who, over time, grew more knowledgeable on Soviet active measures and able to contribute. In this sense, the members all viewed one another as colleagues because they had “a common interest in the subject.”³⁷⁰ Some members valued this educational dimension of their information-sharing as much, if not more, than their productivity: “The value was not in the product but in the sharing of information and ideas; none of us was as smart as all of us.”³⁷¹ Others valued productivity more generally because products and activities made the group a success. David Hertzberg, for example, was widely acknowledged for his Foreign Affairs Notes even though he was one of the younger, and in terms of government service, least experienced group members at the time.³⁷² Similarly, Bailey was widely admired for her leadership competence and ability to get things done, as was Kux. Without dynamic leadership, the group found it difficult to get products out as frequently. Getting a product out or an activity organized and executed required not only knowledge but other skills as well. Conversely, many core members frowned upon those who knew little, could not contribute to group products, and only came out of interest or to monitor and report on the group’s work.³⁷³

As the group developed mutual respect, common expertise, and a record of success, its esprit de corps grew stronger.³⁷⁴ Cohesion had its limits, however. First of all, there were at least two subgroups, and they experienced different levels of cohesion. Cohesion was much stronger among the Tachibana group, so called because they had lunch afterwards at the Tachibana restaurant. Romerstein, Leventhal, Sheren, Poulsen, and a few others started the lunches before Heichler’s tenure. The lunch group was committed and cohesive, but it was also exclusive. It did not include members of the working group that were thought to be less knowledgeable or of whom Romerstein disapproved, including Bailey. One member who went to the lunches said the purpose was teambuilding, “like Japanese businessmen

do.” Members in this Tachibana group spoke of one another as colleagues, regardless of the department or agency they represented. From Bailey’s perspective, the Tachibana group occasionally had a negative effect on the working group’s cohesion. Romerstein would sometimes cite the subgroup’s conclusions on a topic, which would elicit the response from Bailey that no subgroup could commandeer the working group’s decisionmaking process.³⁷⁵ Sheehan, who moved into the chair role after Bailey left, thought the restaurant meetings were just a normal working relationship.

The monitors who made minimal contributions to group output constituted another subgroup, one not appreciated by the more productive group members. Bailey tried to make substantive expertise a precondition for membership. She could not reject representatives, but she could request additional representatives “who were more knowledgeable,” which she did. She also set the tone of the meetings so they were oriented on substance, and this did a lot to diminish the normal bureaucratic give and take. One member with substantial interagency experience notes that in the best (and rarest) interagency groups, members forget the agency they are representing. In most interagency meetings he attended, people “practically wear badges,” but the Active Measures Working Group was not like that. Bailey set a different tone. After the first meeting or so, it did not matter what agency one was from; a stranger viewing a meeting would have had difficulty knowing who represented what agency.³⁷⁶

Bailey’s point of view, however, was a bit different. She was mindful of the interagency pitfalls she had to navigate. According to Bailey, members were always aware of which agency they were representing—“it was a team but a team of agencies.”³⁷⁷ Bailey and other working group leaders believed that some members only made contributions to make their home agencies look cooperative and that everyone cared if their material got in the reports but not always if any other organization’s material was included.³⁷⁸ From a working group leader perspective, group cohesion seemed more fragile. To the extent that the group was cohesive, it was a function of loyalty to the mission. Bailey notes that out of the eight or so interagency groups she chaired during her government career, the Active Measures Working Group was by far the most dedicated.³⁷⁹ Similarly, another less active member with experience on interagency groups agreed that the Active Measures Working Group stood out for its productivity (“the most day-to-day product”).³⁸⁰

The fact that working group members were dedicated to their mission subdued but did not eliminate organizational tensions. Several members noted USIA was jealous that State had the lead for a group whose activities seemed more aligned with the USIA mandate but tolerated the situation because it contributed to getting out product. When State was directed to institu-

tionalize the working group's capability in the form of a new INR office, USIA discomfort grew. Some USIA representatives such as Romerstein believed the new office was not goal-oriented or staffed seriously, and in truth, the new INR office did experience personality conflicts that sapped its productivity.³⁸¹ Romerstein had excellent contacts on the Hill, and given his concerns, he must have been tempted to weigh in with them to transfer responsibility to USIA for the next public report on Soviet active measures. In any case, that is what happened.

Team Learning. Team learning is an ongoing process of reflection and action, through which teams acquire, share, combine, and apply knowledge.³⁸² When newly acquired knowledge is translated into lessons and practice, it can improve both task performance and the quality of intrateam relations. The Active Measures Working Group needed just such a learning process to overcome its initial disadvantageous position. It was an ad hoc, first-of-its-kind government effort that was going up against Soviet professionals who could draw on a repository of experience dating back decades, if not centuries. Although the group made the occasional misstep, it was quick to learn from and correct its mistakes. In this regard, the Active Measures Working Group practiced "exploitation learning," which includes transferring knowledge from outside sources, assessing lessons learned, establishing best practices, and recording knowledge.³⁸³

Most evidently, the members of the working group assimilated knowledge about active measures from outside sources. Some members had great contacts in academia and with U.S. intelligence professionals who could be used to good advantage. Also, defectors such as Levchenko and Bittman briefed and sometimes collaborated with group members. The working group learned through these encounters.³⁸⁴ One analyst described learning about Soviet influence activities through the Soviet press. He read Foreign Broadcast Information Service translations of Soviet articles that discussed how to manipulate unsuspecting groups such as Doctors for Peace.³⁸⁵ Analysts also looked back into history for examples they could emulate. Hertzberg's first Foreign Affairs Note on the expulsion of Soviet officials had precedence in a British counterintelligence effort after World War II.³⁸⁶

Under Kux, the group also adopted a lessons learned mentality—not officially, but in emulating Kux's determination to bounce back from mistakes and not repeat them. One member recalls that in the group's first year, it was "flailing a bit," but "by [1983] it was a lot better, although it was still a learning experience."³⁸⁷ In the beginning, every action the group took amounted to plowing new ground, and they had to watch the results and adjust as necessary. For example, the first Foreign Affairs Note had to be redone with open source reporting after running into classification problems. Similarly, when Kux's first public tussle with a Soviet reporter from TASS turned into a disaster, he reevaluated the group's approach

to preparedness and quality assurance for its initiatives.³⁸⁸ The development of what the group called the grand jury standard, truth squads, and RAP methodology also were learning experiences. The working group refined these methods over time until they became enduring best practices.

The group also learned what worked well and what did not by encouraging feedback from the field, which helped to reduce the learning curve significantly. This practice continued under Bailey, who paid particular attention when posts informed the group that it needed regionally focused reporting that was more relevant to immediate circumstances, such as a report on illegal Soviet depletion of local fishing grounds.³⁸⁹ The Gingrich amendment stimulated learning because it required the group to review its knowledge base self-consciously and report on what it had learned over time.³⁹⁰ The group learned a great deal even if it could not all be made public. For example, Kux's executive secretary, Bill Young, became so familiar with the KGB's primary forgers that he could identify their individual handiwork.³⁹¹ In the end, the group members learned so much about Soviet active measures that they were called upon to educate others in the U.S. Government.³⁹²

Individual-level Variables

Small groups are made up of individual members whose backgrounds, talents, and skills can impinge upon or facilitate group performance. Since by definition there are only so many exceptional people in any given group, organizations need their teams to perform well irrespective of particular members, and they often recruit, train, and organize personnel with that end in mind. Nonetheless, sometimes the nature of the task and other circumstances make small groups critically dependent upon member capabilities for high performance. This proved true in the case of the Active Measures Working Group. The expertise resident in the core membership was quite unusual for an interagency group, and the stellar leadership provided by the two deputy assistant secretaries who led through its periods of highest productivity also stands out as a critical source of the group's high performance. Other than the support offered by senior leaders, the competence of the leaders and the extraordinary knowledge base in the membership are the two most salient variables explaining group performance. In the three individual team member-level variables considered below—team composition, rewards, and leadership—we demonstrate why this was so.

Composition. Team composition refers to the characteristics of individuals chosen for the team, which can be a function of intentional team design or happenstance. Like many interagency groups, the Active Measures Working Group was a mix of general and functional specialists

chosen primarily to represent government organizations that had access to needed information. When the group began in 1981, it included representatives from State, CIA, FBI, DOD, and USIA.³⁹³ Under Bailey's tenure, it included as many as 20 representatives from these and other organizations. Throughout the group's existence, it was difficult to distinguish between "members" and "attendees."³⁹⁴ Some people who attended periodically but hardly regularly were just keeping tabs on the group for someone, and others cared deeply about the group's mission but could only stop by as their schedules permitted.³⁹⁵ To the extent the group had to carry so-called straphangers (that is, people just along for the ride), its focus and energy was diluted.

For this reason, Bailey made a point of recruiting subject matter experts. When she took charge, she asked her executive secretary, Sheldon Rapoport, who his counterparts were in other agencies. She had to take whomever other agencies sent, but she quickly let it be known that she was looking for people who could contribute. When organizations sent someone who was not an expert, Bailey would call and ask them to "supplement" their representation with someone more knowledgeable.³⁹⁶ Although many of the core members were Soviet specialists, they also provided functional diversity. Public affairs, public diplomacy, and psychological operations, which many today consider the three core components of strategic communications, were all represented. State Department Public Affairs and USIA representatives were public affairs and public diplomacy experts, respectively, and DOD contributed expertise in "strategic psychological operations." At the time, DOD was also building up some public diplomacy capabilities, and many remember that DOD representatives contributed in this regard.³⁹⁷

In terms of intelligence disciplines, group members mostly represented human intelligence specialties of one sort or another. INR, USIA, CIA, FBI, and DIA provided field reporting and analytic assessments from their respective organizations. INR and USIA also relied heavily on open source analysis. Depending on the issue under consideration, a number of other organizations might be called upon to contribute expertise. For example, normally the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency was only peripherally interested in the work of the group, but it could make a contribution if the working group was examining a Soviet disinformation effort directed at arms control or disarmament issues.³⁹⁸ Similarly, State's regional bureaus could be called upon to assess the political impact of Soviet active measures in their respective areas.

Beyond these broad functional specialties, the group could draw upon Soviet expertise. DIA's Soviet specialists such as David Curtin (who worked for Winnifred Joshua) was a great resource.³⁹⁹ The CIA also sent Soviet experts Richard Malzahn, Linnea Poulsen, and Wallace Spaulding. Spaulding was widely admired for his unparalleled knowledge of the Communist Party, and both Hertzberg and Jim Milburn collaborated with and learned from him.⁴⁰⁰ Milburn

was one of the FBI's foremost experts on the Communist Party USA,⁴⁰¹ and another FBI analyst, Bill Houghton, was highly regarded for his analytic acumen more generally.⁴⁰²

However, expertise on Soviet active measures per se was actually in short supply initially. Many working group members, such as Soviet expert Don Sheehan, had never heard the term active measures when they were sent to the working group. Often what they brought to their task was Russian language competency and either field or analytic experience in Russia, East Europe, or some aspect of U.S.-Soviet relations.⁴⁰³ After spending time on the working group, however, many of the most active members became real experts on active measures. For example, when Linnea Poulsen returned to the CIA after working with the group for 6 years, she became the editor of a CIA publication called *Worldwide Active Measures and Propaganda Alert* that allowed her to draw upon the expertise she had developed with the working group.⁴⁰⁴

Many of those who developed expertise in Soviet active measures while attending the working group meetings note that they learned in part thanks to Romerstein.⁴⁰⁵ He helped build up the group's expertise by exposing members to these professionals as well as to Soviet defectors such as Levchenko. He would mine historical and intelligence archives, digging out facts he could use to educate the group,⁴⁰⁶ and in general readily shared his knowledge on the finer points of active measures with other group members.⁴⁰⁷ Sheren notes that after 2 years on the working group, he became a key active measures expert within CIA's clandestine services "largely due to Romerstein,"⁴⁰⁸ and to this day Bailey credits Romerstein as being her tutor (albeit a somewhat unwilling one).⁴⁰⁹ Other members also readily acknowledge they were tutored by Romerstein (for example, Todd Leventhal, Lucian Heichler, and Stanton Burnet) and, in at least one case, were recruited by Romerstein to join the group because of some special expertise they had (for example, Milburn). If someone showed an interest, Romerstein would ply them with information.⁴¹⁰ As a result, Romerstein was widely recognized as "far and away" the most knowledgeable group member.⁴¹¹ Other members called him the "heart and soul" of the Active Measures Working Group.⁴¹² One member concludes, "If there hadn't been a Romerstein, I don't think there would have been an effective group."⁴¹³

As important as Romerstein was, he was not the whole show. Even Romerstein's most effusive admirers who acknowledged his singular subject matter expertise emphasize that the group was dependent upon a wider range of information and expertise than Romerstein alone could marshal:

The Active Measures Working group was very successful and highly effective. It was smaller and more focused on a single topic [than other interagency groups].

*The reports could not have been done by a single agency; well, they could have but not well. Its value was in the exchange of ideas and information. . . . None of us is as smart as all of us. . . . Ten or fifteen people researching active measures is much more effective.*⁴¹⁴

A harmonious “team personality” is necessary, however, to allow the team to combine diverse talents. Some researchers believe the “big five” team personality characteristics positively related to team performance are team conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, and openness to experience. Romerstein’s recruitment and tutoring of other team members certainly contributed to the working group’s personality and effectiveness with one notable exception: his attitude toward the working group chair, Bailey. The Romerstein-Bailey relationship was contentious but ultimately did not prevent the group from being productive, which requires explanation.

All the working group chairs had to be careful with Romerstein, who “did not suffer fools gladly,” “didn’t particularly like people who disagreed with him,” “saw things in black and white,” and was “not willing to compromise.”⁴¹⁵ Yet Romerstein typically did not allow his self-confidence and passion to disrupt good personal relations with other members, all of whom remember him with great appreciation. Even those at opposite ends of the political spectrum go out of their way to say how much they enjoyed their tête-à-têtes and political banter with him.⁴¹⁶ “He thought his mission was to educate a liberal, and I thought my mission was to educate a conservative,” one member said, but such give and take was not acrimonious. He was an “arch-conservative with a sense of humor.”⁴¹⁷

Common social background helps explain in part the group’s cohesion despite the range of political views in its membership. Burnett, Romerstein, and Heichler, all of whom were close, came from a New York Jewish intellectual background, and other working group members shared similar backgrounds that facilitated group cohesion.⁴¹⁸ Although they came from different social circles, they were from the same area and knew some of the same people.⁴¹⁹ Several members noted that this common background facilitated trust (an observation supported by other research).⁴²⁰ For liberals such as Burnett, knowing that Romerstein once was an ardent Soviet sympathizer increased one’s confidence because “at least he could understand why that political philosophy might be attractive.”⁴²¹

The exception to all this goodwill was Bailey, who, uncharacteristically, Romerstein would “not take under his wing.”⁴²² Given Romerstein’s reputation on the working group and informal leadership status, his attitude toward Bailey had a disproportionate impact. When Bailey arrived and replaced Heichler, many viewed her as a “novice” and outsider, and even as a “bit abrasive.”⁴²³

Perhaps being a woman—particularly in a position of authority—did not help,⁴²⁴ but the real issue for a group that respected knowledge above all else was her perceived lack of expertise.⁴²⁵ For a group that was enjoying an easy camaraderie under Heichler⁴²⁶ and that had solidified around Romerstein and their own collective expertise, the sudden appearance of a political appointee⁴²⁷ issuing instructions was jarring. Romerstein was also a political appointee, brought into the administration by Wick, but only at the GS-15 level and to head an office—a level below Bailey’s senior executive and deputy secretary status. Perhaps Romerstein was also disappointed that the hard-charging Sulc had not won the position instead of Bailey. In any case, a major conflict between the working group’s titular leader and its informal leader could easily have crippled the team’s productivity. This did not happen. Instead, under Bailey’s leadership the group enjoyed its highest period of productivity, and it is worthwhile reviewing why.

First, Bailey quickly proved her worth to other members of the group, as we detail below. She was as “consumed” by the mission as Romerstein was.⁴²⁸ It was therefore hard for Romerstein to stand in the way of group productivity, and he was not inclined to do so anyway. He always attached more priority to mission success than to holding a grudge. Moreover, as many members recognized, Bailey’s managerial and writing skills perfectly complemented Romerstein’s subject matter expertise. Romerstein had trouble getting out written products.⁴²⁹ He was “a warrior” given to political action, not analysis and writing. He did not have a graduate education, and when he published, it was generally in narrative form.⁴³⁰ He would rather cogitate and dispute than analyze and synthesize. Bailey, on the other hand, was a trained political scientist, managed well, stayed on target, and wrote and edited superbly. Similarly, her subordinate in INR, David Hertzberg, produced the Foreign Affairs Notes for the most part, which was a major output of the working group.

In addition, and in keeping with her leadership skills, Bailey recognized she was on the wrong track and adjusted course. She had to “mend fences with Romerstein” after a bit of a rocky start (and periodically) thereafter,⁴³¹ and she did so gracefully. She recalls that “Herb had the most interesting insights and I had to call hourly for his input.” If he would not come, she would just interview him and then would write it up to be reviewed by the entire team in the draft report.⁴³² The fact that Bailey gave priority to accuracy and adopted the more constrained approach of her State predecessors (in contrast to Romerstein’s penchant for edgier material) probably was reassuring to the rest of the group as well. For all these reasons, the tension between Bailey and Romerstein—which never entirely disappeared—complicated Bailey’s management job but did not prevent the team from being highly productive.⁴³³

Rewards. Monetary and recognition rewards are often used to attract, motivate, and retain members on teams. However, rewards played little role in attracting people to the Active Measures Working Group. Like most interagency groups, members were mostly assigned to the group by their superiors. Romerstein did scout out new talent and in at least one case helped get FBI expert Jim Milburn on the group. Some working group leaders also made a point of sending praise for good individual performance to parent agencies. Don Sheehan would give people public praise,⁴³⁴ and Bailey also gave “atta boys,” wrote letters to members’ bosses to say they had done great work that was much appreciated, and celebrated milestone achievements such as the publication of their first major report with outings to restaurants.⁴³⁵

For the most part, however, expectations of rewards from group participation were low. Attending the working group was considered safe (that is, not career-damaging) but not necessarily helpful for career advancement. Looking back, and despite the group’s great reputation, some members believe that it was a hard experience for promotion boards in State and other parent organizations to evaluate and thus not a useful activity for career advancement.⁴³⁶ In other cases, particularly DIA, the organizational culture (or leadership) of the parent organization seemed to appreciate the working group more. The DIA’s David Curtin is one of the few mentioned by our many interviewees whose career seemed to benefit from his experience on the working group. Certainly no one in State expected participation to be particularly career-enhancing, which is one reason Kux was admired for taking the task on.⁴³⁷ As it turned out, Kux’s efforts were recognized by the Intelligence Community. William Casey awarded Kux the National Distinguished Intelligence Award for his leadership in standing up the group.⁴³⁸ State gave him another hard (and classified) interagency effort to lead.⁴³⁹

The main incentive for participation in the working group was “job satisfaction,” sometimes referred to in organizational literature as “affective impetuous.” All the members we interviewed had a positive experience with the group, and some considered it one of their better career experiences. In lauding the group, members invariably mentioned the fact that it was actually productive (often in contradistinction to their many other interagency group experiences). Parent organizations also supported the working group because it associated them with a productive effort.⁴⁴⁰ Thus, the desire to continue participating was not driven by rational economic or career enticements but by positive emotions generated by direct experience with the working group and its successes.

Leadership. Leadership on the Active Measures Working Group was variable, but primarily of two types—traditional and shared⁴⁴¹—that were rooted in rank as well as personalities. Both Kux and Bailey reportedly cultivated a collegial atmosphere,⁴⁴² but there was

never any question that they were in charge. In contrast, when Lucian Heichler had the helm, he operated more on the basis of consensus—“a more traditional [Foreign Service Officer] type”—approaching what some would characterize as a “shared leadership” approach.⁴⁴³ He was appreciated for being cordial and competent, but with a lower rank, and at the end of his career, he could not exercise as much authority.⁴⁴⁴ Similarly, the group was more passive under Sheehan when “the experts around the table” who knew more tended to “run the show.” Sheehan did not enjoy the deputy assistant secretary status of Kux and Bailey, and actually had a substantially lower rank than Heichler.⁴⁴⁵ Office director-level working group chairs such as Sheehan simply did not have the clout to be forcefully directive. In contrast, the higher ranking Kux and Bailey exercised leadership in a top-down and directive fashion in keeping with what many call “traditional” leadership.⁴⁴⁶ Kux and Bailey established group goals, assessed and directed how the group would overcome impediments to reaching its goals, and then implemented solutions.

Some believe that traditional leadership is more appropriate when a new group is first stood up because a wide range of fundamental decisions must be made quickly and without the benefit of precedents. Over time, as productive culture and decisionmaking norms take root, the group can adopt more of a shared leadership model. In this regard, we must recall that when Bailey took over she was focused on a new effort directed at responding to the Gingrich amendment requirement for a major public report on active measures. In other words, she thought she was starting the effort afresh. Moreover, traditional leadership is the norm in government. It was expected and, in the case of Kux and Bailey, it was widely appreciated for several reasons.

Both leaders spent a good deal of their time on the working group’s agenda despite having other responsibilities,⁴⁴⁷ a level of commitment not matched by the other deputy assistant secretaries who briefly chaired the group. Their rank helped them to provide what all agreed was the “most dynamic” leadership for the working group, but their personalities also played a role. Both involved themselves directly in the work of the group rather than just tasking others, and both were described as more forceful than “the traditional [Foreign Service Officer] type.”⁴⁴⁸ For example, Kux was described as “an action guy,” “hand’s on,” “hard working,” a bit demanding but a “get the job done kind of guy.”⁴⁴⁹ Kux ruffled feathers if he had to,⁴⁵⁰ and his reputation for forging ahead and overcoming obstacles gave him a bit of a rogue reputation. His staff had a little fun at his expense by posting a *Dennis the Menace* movie poster outside his office, but the action actually contributed to high morale in the group. They knew their work was going to produce effects, and that someone was keenly attentive to what the effects would be. Working group members appreciated Kux and Bailey because they knew the working group leaders were

swimming against the tide at State, particularly Kux who had to chart the initial path for the group.⁴⁵¹ Both leaders were also described as good listeners⁴⁵² who were committed to keeping the group well informed. Bailey, for example, was described as having a “good knack for openness” which “was very good for the morale of the group.”⁴⁵³

While Kux was admired for being “very effective,” “highly respected,” and “a prime mover,” members recall that Bailey got off to a more difficult start.⁴⁵⁴ Like Kux, she was committed, hard-working, and willing to battle for the group,⁴⁵⁵ but it took her longer to win the confidence of members for several reasons. Following Kux’s departure, State was not able to provide committed deputy assistant secretary leadership, and members were wary of a young female political appointee who was not a subject matter expert.⁴⁵⁶ Bailey had to overcome both the social-demographic and management-analyst divide if she was to gain control. She began by establishing order and diving into the work of getting the Gingrich report done. Her management approach was described as “strait-laced,” and initially a bit overbearing. She was all business, and there was little time for “chitchat” in the meetings.

When Kux began the group, he sat in the middle of the long INR conference table with Herb Romerstein at his immediate right hand with the other agency representatives fanning out in a circle around the table.⁴⁵⁷ When Bailey arrived at her first meeting, the setting was different, and she recalls that it “foretold of tensions that would be ever-present in the group”:

The trouble began before even a word was spoken. It is often the case that the chairman sits at the head of the table, and [I] intended to sit at the head of the INR conference room table. When [I] walked into the first meeting, Herb Romerstein was already seated at the head of the table and was discussing with a few of his colleagues what he thought should be in the report. [I] decided not to ask him to move and went to the other end of the table and called the meeting to order and began to address the agenda. When the topic of the report was raised, Romerstein interjected that “we have already decided.” [I] had to gently tussle with him verbally and establish that nothing had been decided by any subgroup and that the group would be operating as a whole, and under [my] leadership. From that day onward, Romerstein was often more of a divisive force than a constructive one, and he continued to sit at one end of the table.⁴⁵⁸

Bailey had organized her first meeting “following the model of other interagency working groups she had served on,” setting out “the objective of the working group—to respond to the

Gingrich requirement—and proposing a general outline,” “allocating some housekeeping tasks, such as making sure that there would be memoranda written on each meeting, what was discussed, and who was to do what.”⁴⁵⁹ Some members were put off by this initial meeting, either out of loyalty to Romerstein or because they thought their expertise had not been acknowledged or because they genuinely felt Bailey had been too perfunctory. One remembers that Bailey initially “thought she’d just give orders and get things done.”⁴⁶⁰ From Bailey’s point of view, however, the essential problem was that “Romerstein firmly believed that the Gingrich report should have been tasked to USIA, with him at the helm of the interagency group” and that “the working group should be doing much more than just exposing and describing active measures; it should be countering them.”⁴⁶¹

The group’s initial reaction to Bailey probably was a combination of factors, including Romerstein’s status and predilections and her management style. However, it is important to note that soon, after demonstrating she could get things done, her direct approach was viewed favorably. She was described as “a very bright person,” “very competent,” “straightforward,” and “someone who wanted to get the facts right.”⁴⁶² She did have to work to win over the group members. In some cases she did that by directly confronting them. Both of her executive secretaries recall such an experience. Sheldon Rapoport said that “Bailey gave me hell once and deservedly so.” He failed to apprise her of the different viewpoints in play and she emphasized that she wanted to be told when there were substantive differences and that she might be wrong.⁴⁶³ Similarly, Andrew Sheren was once chastised by Bailey for being too negative. He frequently advised her on why some of her initiatives might not be practical but failed to offer positive alternatives. He saw her point of view, quickly changed, and improved their relationship.⁴⁶⁴ In other cases, Bailey went out of her way to woo support, for example, by being particularly attentive to Romerstein. One member notes that Bailey “understood she was on the wrong track and came back from it and did a great job,”⁴⁶⁵ in part by reaching out to Romerstein.

Bailey also had to come to grips with the fact that she was an outsider coming into a somewhat “exclusive club.” For example, when she became the State representative on the classified NSC working group, which Romerstein attended as well, much of the substantive discussion was delayed until after she departed the formal meetings. She perceptively decided it was better not to be associated with the classified activity set in any case.⁴⁶⁶ She was credited with correctly evaluating and overcoming these circumstances. She stopped worrying about being an “insider” and instead focused on managing the group and the Gingrich report, which required a massive effort. Before Bailey’s arrival, her executive secretary did not believe the report would

get done. The group was meeting periodically, talking and building their expertise, but productivity had fallen off.

Bailey organized a production agenda, pulled ideas together, and got the group to agree on what they could put in the report. She delegated responsibility for writing the sections of the report but controlled the meetings and editing process. She used the meetings to coordinate the work of the group members and to keep them informed. Bailey used a new technology at the time—word processors—to control the editing process. She collected floppy discs from each contributor and then edited successive drafts on her workstation. She then presented this version to the group for approval. None of the previous reports had been drafted in this manner, and the new division of labor reinforced her leadership. Bailey also used this process to corral Romerstein's passion and generate useable product. If he was upset and not attending meetings, Bailey would call him, interview him, and then draft his contribution to the report. She recognized that the analysts had the knowledge and were the creative force.⁴⁶⁷ Her role, she says, was to serve as the “orchestra leader” and give her team the freedom to create.⁴⁶⁸ By the time the report was done, Bailey was firmly in charge of the group and widely appreciated for having done “a superb job.”⁴⁶⁹

Atrophy and Decline: 1988–1992

Kathleen Bailey left the group at the end of 1987 after managing the group through its period of greatest productivity. Donald Sheehan, director of the newly formed Office of Disinformation, Analysis, and Response in INR, took over chairmanship of the group. Bailey had hired Sheehan because he had near fluency in Russian and substantive knowledge of Soviet tactics. Of all the available Foreign Service Officers, he seemed best qualified for the job.⁴⁷⁰ But once again, State was relegating the job of leading the working group—which was full of strong-minded and confident individuals—to an office director with substantially less clout than a deputy assistant secretary. Working group productivity soon fell off, but not just because of the leadership change.

Sheehan visited the Pentagon to assess DOD support and made trips to overseas posts at the beginning of his tour as director.⁴⁷¹ He was comfortable with both, being a former Marine and Soviet expert with numerous tours. He liked the face-to-face contact with those serving on “the front lines.”⁴⁷² Meanwhile, back in DC, the last Foreign Affairs Note was published in January of 1988. Over the spring of 1988, the Office of Disinformation, Analysis, and Response began to lose its analytical core when expert staffers such as Hertzberg moved ahead in their careers and on to other postings. These personnel shifts stripped the group of much of its former

vitality and cohesion. There was little impetus to fix State's declining capability, especially given the perception that U.S.-Soviet relations were on the mend. Glasnost was in full swing, and the Soviet Union had promised that it would cease disinformation operations. Moreover, many of the Reagan appointees who supported the working group had left the NSC in the aftermath of the Iran-Contra scandal.⁴⁷³ Disinformation was regaining its dirty word status as an inconvenient topic often best ignored.

Bailey, who had moved over to work on arms control in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, could only watch helplessly as the disinformation office that she set up in INR imploded. The center of gravity then shifted to USIA's Office to Counter Soviet Disinformation. Charles Wick, largely unscathed from the Iran-Contra debacle, was still going strong in USIA. His Office to Counter Soviet Disinformation was really only two people—Romerstein and Leventhal—but they were among the handful of the most knowledgeable people in the U.S. Government on Soviet active measures.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, Wick and Romerstein specifically had always been eager to lead the counter-active measures effort. Wick had personally recruited Romerstein in 1983 to come to USIA to work on Soviet disinformation.⁴⁷⁵ They were “ideologically” compatible. Wick was far more permissive of outright information warfare than State and often engaged in ideological sparring with his Soviet counterparts in meetings as did Romerstein. USIA had been jealous of State's leadership of the working group,⁴⁷⁶ and Romerstein considered the personnel in the new INR office to be well intentioned but “amateurs.”

Moreover, one well-placed source indicates that after Shultz's confrontation with Gorbachev over the working group's report, he returned to State irritated that the report had been such a source of friction. He ordered his staff to make sure State did not produce another such report.⁴⁷⁷ Shultz's public accounts of the meeting, including his memoirs, substantiate this account. They treat the report as an irritant, explain Shultz's motives for his stern response, and dismiss the report as a congressional requirement with content “supplied largely by the CIA and other intelligence agencies.”⁴⁷⁸ This account also would readily explain why some members of the group felt they had to lobby Congress to reassign responsibility for the report to USIA.⁴⁷⁹ Whether it was because State and INR were once again in disarray on the topic, or because Shultz had ordered State to cease and desist from future such reports (or both), in the spring of 1988 the House Appropriations Committee directed that USIA prepare a report on Soviet active measures in the era of Glasnost. Donald Sheehan, State's erstwhile leader of the working group did not object; his hands were full with intraoffice personnel squabbles and Schultz's reaction.⁴⁸⁰ A few months later, in June 1988, USIA delivered the report, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, to Congress.⁴⁸¹ The forward to Wick's testimony states

that Leventhal, the policy officer on Soviet disinformation and active measures since 1987, had the major responsibility for compiling the report.⁴⁸²

USIA continued to take the lead on active measures. In September 1988, talks between Wick and Valentine Falin, the chief of the Soviet news agency Novosti, resulted in an agreement “to establish better mechanisms for clarifying differences and correcting alleged errors in information disseminated by the other side.”⁴⁸³ A system of face-to-face meetings was agreed upon as a “disinformation early warning system” of sorts. In November, USIA and the Soviets also created fax-transmission arrangements to speed the process. Soviet leaders wanted to keep the disinformation battle out of the media and contained within bilateral talks. The Active Measures Working Group reports had taken their toll. USIA internal memos indicate that they viewed Soviet pleading to suspend disinformation programs as a clear sign that America’s efforts to raise the cost of Soviet disinformation were working.⁴⁸⁴

While USIA consolidated its hold on active measures leadership, the quality of the working group’s membership declined. Both the CIA’s and FBI’s longest serving group members distanced themselves and began sending younger, less experienced participants in their stead. Andrew Sheren, the executive secretary from 1984–1986 on loan from CIA, returned to the Agency as an active measures subject matter expert and ultimately assumed responsibility for active measures within the clandestine services.⁴⁸⁵ FBI employees such as Jim Milburn and David Major also moved on to different responsibilities that took their attention from the group. More insidiously, Robert Hansen, who was spying for the Soviets, began to attend the working group meetings as the FBI liaison to INR.⁴⁸⁶ As meetings frequency fell from biweekly to monthly and sometimes bimonthly, the lack of effective working group leadership and the declining active measures effort from Moscow led to a decline in attendance and interest.⁴⁸⁷ When the Reagan administration ended in January 1989, so did much of the political support for the effort.

Romerstein and Leventhal were not fazed by the change of administration and Wick’s retirement. As long as there were Soviet active measures, they continued to carry the torch, working the subject for USIA full-time. With the working group in decline, it took almost 2 years for the group to publish again. In September 1989, the last State Department annual report on *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1987–1988* was published.⁴⁸⁸ The report was doomed to serve as a mere footnote to history. The Iron Curtain began to fall in September 1989, and 2 months later, the Berlin Wall came down. Not long thereafter, the Soviet Union dissolved despite last-ditch efforts by hardcore communists to save the regime. The *raison d’être* of the group disappeared, and along with it bureaucratic interest in the topic.⁴⁸⁹ Even if the working group’s last report had not been subsumed in

ongoing historical events, its information was over a year old and overlapped with much of USIA's 1988 report.⁴⁹⁰

At this point, it was fair to say that the Active Measures Working Group effectively ceased to exist. Romerstein retired in 1989. While some of the members continued to meet, one of them described the group's meetings in the 1990s as "an exercise in nostalgia."⁴⁹¹ The group's final report, "Soviet Active measures in the 'Post-Cold War' Era 1988–1991," prepared at the request of the House of Representatives, came out in June 1992.⁴⁹² Todd Leventhal wrote it under the auspices of USIA. By the time of publication, the Soviet Union no longer existed. However, it did offer a fascinating window into how the Soviets tried to alarm the West about the impending breakup of the Soviet Union. It captured attempts by the KGB hardliners to forestall regime demolition by adopting a disinformation theme to the effect that it was not safe for the United States to let the Soviet Union implode. The report also warned that even though the Soviet Union had collapsed, active measures were still a threat to U.S. interests because a number of anti-American groups and countries were adopting and expanding the use of active measures: "As long as states and groups interested in manipulating world opinion, limiting U.S. Government actions, or generating opposition to U.S. policies and interests continue to use these techniques, there will be a need for the United States Information Agency to systematically monitor, analyze, and counter them."⁴⁹³

Leventhal also noted that the small budgetary outlays required to keep two USIA staff (Romerstein and Leventhal) working on disinformation were being shifted to other priorities. Eliminating the Active Measures Working Group would not produce any significant budgetary savings, yet it disappeared anyway. Leaders did not see the need for it in the post–Cold War world.

Romerstein went to Moscow after the fall of the Soviet Union to do research in the KGB archives on active measures.⁴⁹⁴ The U.S. Government was trying to understand the KGB's successor organization at that time, and no one was particularly interested in the history of KGB active measures. In succeeding years, Leventhal served as a lonely guardian against disinformation and active measures, sounding the alarm on recurring disinformation attacks on the United States over "harvesting baby parts" and the "AIDS ethnic weapon." In 1996, he too left government. Other former members of the group would carry on the fight against enemy active measures in their retirement. Romerstein continued to write about and expose historical espionage cases and expound on the dangers of disinformation and totalitarianism. Wallace Spaulding still produces a newsletter about communist fronts (with emphasis on Latin America).⁴⁹⁵ He is sure some of his subscribers are his old communist adversaries, and he remains well known to Chinese intelligence. When he visited

a few years ago, the Chinese made a point of letting him know that they were aware of his presence and his research interests.⁴⁹⁶ Leventhal returned to government after a few years away. He now works in the Department of State where he runs a one-man counter-misinformation operation and leads a contemporary interagency group on the same topic. The Soviet Union, Reagan administration, and many of the government's Soviet experts have disappeared, but some core members of the Active Measures Working Group soldier on in a fitting coda to a remarkable interagency effort.

Performance Assessment

Having established in detail how the Active Measures Working Group operated at its height of productivity, and why it declined and ultimately ceased to exist, we can now assess with greater precision its actual level of effectiveness. Using the tripartite standards explained at the outset, we can summarize the group's performance and identify areas where the group excelled and where its performance was limited.

The least demanding measure of effectiveness for most interagency groups is whether they shared information sufficiently to allow departments and agencies to deconflict their activities. Overall, the working group shared information well, including classified information. Expertise was openly shared with any members expressing an interest in actually contributing to group output. That said, the parent organizations never lost control of their information. They decided in advance what their representatives would be willing to give up for use by the group. In addition, at least on one occasion when the FBI confronted Mayor Koch, a member organization used group information to act unilaterally before the group could decide on a common course of action.

A more demanding standard for assessing group performance is active cooperation. While some members believed that the primary purpose of group meetings was information-sharing, many group activities required more active cooperation, especially the road shows and public reports. The group also pulled together when confronted with major challenges such as the need to respond to the Olympic Games forgeries. During the highest period of productivity, cooperative decisionmaking and activities were the norm as Bailey made the members feel as if their major public reports were truly a group effort. In addition, Kux's openness to Romerstein despite his status as a congressional staffer adds an unusual if limited example of legislative-executive branch cooperation⁴⁹⁷ to the working group's record. Even so, there were limits to cooperation. The group did not maintain a high steady-state level of productivity. The frequency of meetings rose and fell over time, and some products—such as

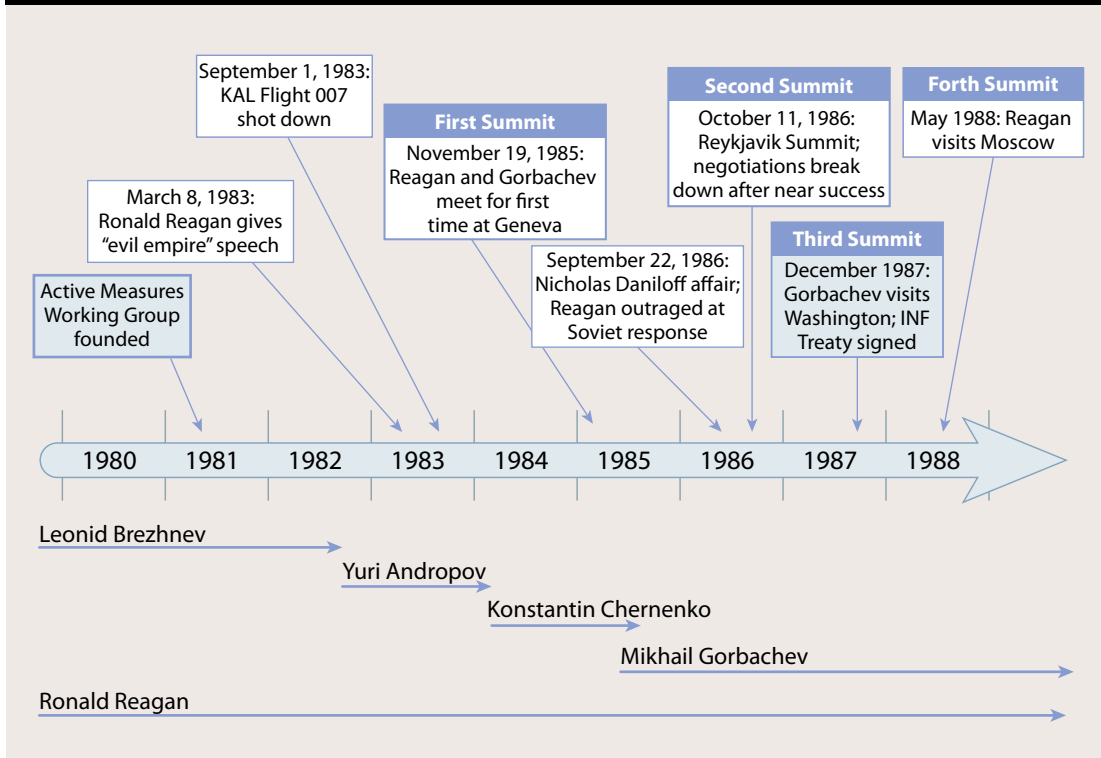
the Foreign Affairs Notes that were mostly produced by David Hertzberg in INR—were the result of individual initiative more than group cooperation. In addition, State's lead was never in doubt under Kux and Bailey. Even though these leaders cultivated a collegial atmosphere, the fact that State's viewpoint on the importance and correct response to active measures dominated the group was a source of irritation for USIA personnel that on occasion diminished interagency cooperation. It also appears that at the high point of the group's impact, State's titular leader, Secretary Shultz, unilaterally ordered a cessation in reports, thus obliging Congress to intervene to transfer the working group's lead to USIA to ensure that its products would continue.

The highest standard for assessing group performance is actual results. The group deserves credit for even being able to make a case for evaluation by this standard. The group was established to counter Soviet active measures, but it could have interpreted this mandate narrowly as merely a license for coordinating broad U.S. Government policy positions on the topic. This is the course that an interagency group operating at the national level in Washington, DC, typically would have followed, particularly since the national security bureaucracy was strongly inclined to ignore rather than confront Soviet disinformation. The Active Measures Working Group did establish U.S. policy on responding to Soviet disinformation, but it also immediately—and atypically—launched into active programs to challenge Soviet disinformation directly, exposing some Soviet active measures outright and raising the political costs of others.⁴⁹⁸

The fact that the group actually created output that affected U.S.-Soviet relations is laudable and unusual, but we need to ask how significant the working group's impact was. At the time, many senior officials explained why it was difficult to assess both the impact of Soviet disinformation and the attempts to counter it.⁴⁹⁹ However, in hindsight, an estimate of the group's significance can be made by assessing the general importance of disinformation in U.S.-Soviet relations. We need to ask how important disinformation was in U.S.-Soviet relations, whether Soviet disinformation seriously hurt the United States, and, finally, whether the working group's output had much impact on the way either side viewed disinformation during the 1980s.

The answer to the first question is that disinformation was a serious irritant because it reduced trust,⁵⁰⁰ but neither side considered it a central issue in U.S.-Soviet relations. Both sides expected hostile rhetoric from the other and neither side linked the elimination or reduction of disinformation to progress in strategic arms control negotiations, the centerpiece of U.S.-Soviet relations. However, the increasingly aggressive use of blatant lies by the Soviet Union, and particularly those that seriously damaged U.S. interests and cost lives, became a growing concern to the United States. Moreover, there were some noteworthy differences in the way that each side

Figure 4.



understood the importance of disinformation and why it was the Soviet Union that eventually agreed to limit its use of disinformation rather than the United States.

In his memoirs, President Reagan never mentions any of the calumnies perpetrated by Soviet propaganda organs, and only at one critical point in arms control negotiations does he mention information management more generally, noting that he consciously pursued moderation in public comments about Gorbachev and that he counted on world opinion to bring the Soviets into line.⁵⁰¹ Moreover, as Reagan developed a personal relationship with Gorbachev, the impact of hostile rhetoric from government bureaucracies declined even more and was overshadowed by increasingly important private communications.⁵⁰² The two incidents that most strained U.S.-Soviet relations during the Reagan administration are illustrative (see figure 4). In 1983, Reagan and other U.S. leaders were outraged over direct Soviet lies about the shoot down of a Korean airliner in 1983, and they responded with a public diplomacy blitz to excoriate the Soviets.⁵⁰³ The only comparable incident to rile U.S.-Soviet relations occurred 3 years later when the KGB detained an innocent American reporter, Nicholas Daniloff, as a spy. Although the case attracted much attention from the press, what really infuriated Reagan was Gorbachev's refusal to take his personal word that Daniloff was not a spy.⁵⁰⁴

Gorbachev appears more sensitive than President Reagan to government communications and specifically disinformation in his memoirs. He noted that he “crossed a line” the first time he moved beyond officially prepared remarks in a press conference.⁵⁰⁵ He acknowledged Reagan was “under propaganda fire” from the Soviet Union, and he believed that Western leaders were prone to see Soviet foreign policy initiatives as “propaganda tricks.” He also believed that there was “a powerful propaganda machine directed against” the Soviet Union and that Reagan was capable of “anti-communist hysteria,” as reflected in his “evil empire” charge against the Soviet Union. He laments a campaign of “anti-Sovietism” that included “insinuations and insults of all kinds.” Like Reagan, Gorbachev at one point assumed his American protagonist could not stall on arms control because of “world opinion.” More telling, however, is Gorbachev’s description of the key moment at Reykjavik when he passed up an opportunity for “a momentary propaganda advantage” against the United States and instead characterizes the negotiations as a positive breakthrough. By doing so, he believed that he paved the way for a later agreement and demonstrated that “the new Soviet Union was not into propaganda but wanted genuine disarmament.”⁵⁰⁶

In comparison with Reagan, then, Gorbachev’s memoirs suggest that he was more aware of how propaganda could exacerbate tensions. Ultimately, Gorbachev said he intervened to constrain KGB disinformation operations in order to facilitate better U.S.-Soviet relations. He did so because Soviet disinformation undermined prospects for arms control⁵⁰⁷ and fueled “anti-Soviet propaganda.”⁵⁰⁸ It also seems Gorbachev understood that Soviet disinformation more generally acted as a drag upon better U.S.-Soviet relations. The U.S. bureaucracy often debated whether the Soviets had hardliner and moderate factions, but we know for a fact that the United States did and presumably the Soviets knew it as well. For this reason, it can be argued that aggressive KGB disinformation operations were counterproductive inasmuch as they hardened the attitudes of moderates in the U.S. national security establishment, particularly midlevel officials in the Department of State.

Some State leaders were inclined to assess Soviet disinformation as a reflection of disappointment over souring U.S.-Soviet relations⁵⁰⁹ and believed that high-level U.S.-Soviet talks were a prerequisite for better Soviet behavior rather than the other way around.⁵¹⁰ But State could not ignore Soviet forgeries that portrayed the most senior U.S. officials as intent on nuclear first strikes, disinformation campaigns that proved capable of preventing the modernization of NATO’s theater nuclear deterrent, or disinformation that led to the burning of U.S. Embassies and assassination of Embassy personnel, which is why Eagleburger’s 1983 article identifies Soviet active measures as a serious impediment to better relations that must be countered:

*While not an immediate, mortal threat to the West, they are harmful, although the precise degree is difficult to determine. Whatever danger active measures pose, their continuing use in itself is an obvious obstacle to improved relations with the Soviet Union. While recognizing that active measures are but one aspect of our complex relationship, common sense requires that we counter these intrusions not only through effective counterintelligence but by keeping our citizens as fully informed as possible of the deceptive practices to which they are exposed. Much as we would like to see active measures eliminated from the conduct of foreign affairs, we must realistically accept the implications of these hostile Soviet activities and contain them to the best of our ability.*⁵¹¹

This point of view explains why State, albeit with reservations, led the Active Measures Working Group, and why it also explicitly linked progress on reducing Soviet disinformation to progress on some issues of lesser importance to the Soviet Union. For example, the United States would not cooperate with medical research on AIDS while the Soviet Union continued to lie about a U.S. role in creating the virus.⁵¹² There was also a broader linkage between disinformation and better U.S.-Soviet relations. In State's view, countering disinformation was never important enough to be linked to progress on nuclear arms control (unlike immigration or Third World interventions), but, with encouragement from Reagan appointees, it eventually was seen as a serious impediment to better relations in general. As one key Reagan negotiator who happened to be a Foreign Service Officer noted in retrospect, the Reagan administration's concept of linkage was not "a rigid 'you must do x before we do y' but a more general attitude that improvement of relations in one area could not get far ahead of improvement in others."⁵¹³

As for the Soviets, Gorbachev came to believe that Soviet disinformation was an impediment to better U.S.-Soviet relations—quickly but not immediately. The fact that he complained to Secretary Shultz about the Active Measures Working Group report exposing Soviet disinformation indicates that he did not initially understand the asymmetries in the U.S. and Soviet approaches to information management and political action. Initially, he thought the report was crude U.S. propaganda that unnecessarily complicated progress on more important topics. However, when rebuffed by Shultz, Gorbachev backed off and had the opportunity to check into the contents of the report and its allegations. Perhaps he discovered that, contrary to popular belief, it was not true that both parties egregiously practiced the "big lie."

When it came to disinformation and political action, many believed that "both sides did it" and that they were "part of the game."⁵¹⁴ Eagleburger addressed this common objection

to responding to Soviet disinformation in his article on Soviet active measures. The logical response, he said, was to point out that free societies “cannot effectively compete” in disinformation. Our laws protect views friendly to foreign adversaries while any efforts on our part to influence the perceptions of Soviet audiences would fail because of the iron control exercised by the Soviet state over all media.⁵¹⁵ Similarly, Romerstein addressed the issue in one of his many reports on the subject by categorically denying the United States used “political propaganda forgeries” against the Soviet Union.⁵¹⁶ He said that during his many years of oversight of the CIA as a congressional staffer, he never saw any evidence that the United States used this tactic. Put differently, the CIA engaged in “political action,” including efforts to influence media overseas, but did not fabricate documents purportedly issued by senior Soviet leaders in an attempt to blackguard the Soviet Union. It is important to acknowledge this disparity in approaches to disinformation for one simple reason: It meant that if anyone was going to moderate use of blatant disinformation, it would have to be the Soviet Union, which practiced it.

Apparently, Gorbachev came to this conclusion in part because of the argument with Shultz over the working group’s public report. Shultz suspected that former Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin put Gorbachev up to the confrontation.⁵¹⁷ He does not say why, but it stands to reason. In 1986, Dobrynin was recalled to Moscow against his will and assigned by Gorbachev to lead the Secretariat of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s International Department, which among other things was responsible for coordinating Soviet front groups and foreign communist parties in support of Soviet propaganda campaigns.⁵¹⁸ Because of his in-depth knowledge of the U.S. Government and his new responsibilities, Dobrynin would have known about the Active Measures Working Group and likely would have explained its report to Gorbachev and recommended a response. He also wanted to involve the International Department more directly in managing Soviet foreign affairs and initially succeeded in advising Gorbachev directly on U.S.-Soviet relations.⁵¹⁹ Dobrynin does not mention the argument over the working group report in his memoirs, but he does make it clear that he thought Gorbachev was too weak when negotiating with Shultz.⁵²⁰ Therefore, whether Shultz was guessing or had intelligence suggesting that it was Dobrynin who put Gorbachev up to criticizing the report, there is reason to believe he was correct in his supposition.

The mini-verbal offensive by Gorbachev failed to elicit any sympathy from Secretary Shultz, however, and may have backfired against Dobrynin if he was the instigator of the incident. Shultz, who was determined to give a robust argument in response whenever Gorbachev “went on the offensive,” pushed back instead of apologizing.⁵²¹ In turn, Gorbachev backed off rather

than escalated and tried to end the meeting on a positive note.⁵²² He did not want to alienate Shultz, who was widely known to be the Soviet's most sympathetic interlocutor in the Reagan administration, and he did not want to derail progress on arms control. Since his anger over the report appeared genuine and he even cited details about one particular finding in the report,⁵²³ it is possible that he was not fully informed about KGB disinformation activities⁵²⁴ and thus the basic accuracy of the report. Perhaps after the meeting, Gorbachev investigated the claims in the working group report more closely and determined they were essentially correct. In any case, it is clear that he reassessed the value of Soviet disinformation. Just days later, Gorbachev pulled Charles Wick aside and said: "No more disinformation; I don't want politicians and bureaucrats creating all these tensions anymore, disinformation and all that. It's going to be a new day."⁵²⁵

After this pronouncement by Gorbachev, the Soviet press adopted a different tone in responding to the working group's public report. Up until that point, the press had lambasted the report as a pack of lies.⁵²⁶ Thereafter, it took a softer line, lamenting the fact that some elements in the U.S. Government continued to cultivate an "enemy image" of the Soviet Union.⁵²⁷ More importantly, the Soviet Union officially recanted a number of its most egregious fabrications, including the AIDS disinformation, and engaged USIA to resolve complaints about disinformation in direct meetings and other confidence-building measures.⁵²⁸ This Soviet reversal on AIDS,⁵²⁹ which was quickly applauded by the State spokesman,⁵³⁰ did not signal an end to all KGB disinformation.⁵³¹ Still, Gorbachev had promised no more disinformation and had taken some corrective action, not only by publically recanting the AIDS story, but also by privately diminishing the influence of Dobrynin and his International Department. In the months following the confrontation with Shultz, he distanced himself from Dobrynin and ordered the International Department to concentrate on explaining the meaning of his reforms to overseas communist audiences.⁵³² Thus, in retrospect, it appears that Gorbachev wanted to remove "the big lie" as an impediment to better U.S.-Soviet relations if not forswear its use as a tool of Soviet foreign policy more generally.⁵³³

To sum up, Soviet disinformation was an important issue in U.S.-Soviet relations, but not sufficiently damaging for the United States to link its reduction with strategic arms control, or sufficiently valuable to the Soviet Union for Gorbachev to allow it to stymie progress on improving U.S.-Soviet relations. This general strategic assessment left room for disagreement about the actual impact of Soviet disinformation on U.S. interests, which was and remains a controversial issue. As many commentators pointed out at the time, the Soviets clearly thought their disinformation operations were effective because they invested heavily in them and more so over time until Gorbachev ordered restraint. They thought, for example, that the damage wrought by a quality

forgery could never be completely expunged by the United States even if it reacted quickly and with compelling evidence. As Thomas Thorne noted in testimony to Congress, the Soviets took the long view, believing active measures damaged opponents over time and at the margin, possibly opening the way for larger gains later, akin to the use of pawns in a chess game.⁵³⁴

Over time, the U.S. national security bureaucracy stopped considering Soviet disinformation inconsequential and adopted the Soviet view of disinformation's efficacy. Those who did not support the creation of the Active Measure Working Group or its activities never believed (and still do not today) that Soviet disinformation operations were effective, while working group supporters were convinced that they were a critical battlefield in the all-important war of ideas.⁵³⁵ The middle ground was occupied by people such as Under Secretary Eagleburger and Deputy CIA Director Robert Gates, who argued that Soviet active measures were deleterious but generally not decisive, although they could be effective enough to cause major foreign policy reversals in closely contested cases. Gates made this point repeatedly under persistent questioning from a skeptical Senate. While noting that the precise effects of Soviet political influence activities are hard to assess because they capitalize on existing sentiments in target countries, he nonetheless concluded that "in a close election or legislative battle, they can make the difference." Asked to offer examples, he cited the Dutch decision on the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces and a Spanish referendum on participation in NATO.⁵³⁶ Thus, over time, and under pressure from the Reagan administration and some hardline anti-communists in Congress, the U.S. national security system adopted an assessment of Soviet measures that was similar to the Soviet's own assessment: they were effective on the margin and occasionally could make the difference in who prevailed over a major foreign policy issue. This assessment justified an organized and persistent effort to counter Soviet disinformation, and the mechanism for that effort was the Active Measures Working Group.⁵³⁷

It also seems clear that the working group made a significant difference in how both sides viewed disinformation. Its output directly affected Gorbachev's awareness that egregious Soviet disinformation propaganda against the United States was counterproductive. Gorbachev eventually might have reached the same conclusion even if the working group never existed, but clearly its output accelerated his decision to cry "Uncle Sam" on disinformation. In addition, the working group's products and activities gradually made the public, news media, Congress, and some U.S. officials more sensitive to the importance of Soviet disinformation.

It is also possible to make the case that the working group made an economic contribution to bringing the Soviet Union to the point where its leaders valued better relations with the United States more than unrestrained competition. When the United States decided to organize

and invigorate its response to Soviet disinformation, the Soviet bureaucracy initially redoubled its efforts to disseminate disinformation and did so with increasing sophistication. For example, Soviet forgeries detected by the working group increased each year from 1980 through 1983 (4 in 1980, 7 in 1981, 9 in 1982, and 12 in 1983).⁵³⁸ Mounting a more vigorous disinformation effort was expensive for the Soviet Union, which was estimated to be spending about \$3 to 4 billion per year⁵³⁹ in hard currency on its information-centric active measures at the beginning of the 1980s. By the end of the decade, some insiders believed that the Soviet Union was spending three to five times that much. If so, the working group must receive some credit for quintupling the Soviet disinformation budget while reducing the effort's impact.

Working group expectations for effects were more modest at the time, however. The group wanted to reduce the effectiveness of Soviet disinformation operations by gradually building awareness of them. In this regard, group members felt they were “extraordinarily productive,”⁵⁴⁰ exposed a lot of active measures,⁵⁴¹ and sensitized many people both in the United States and overseas to Soviet active measures.⁵⁴² They also knew fighting disinformation was an enduring task. Their goal, over time, was to produce more political “freedom of maneuver” for the United States and less for the Soviet Union; in other words, to minimize the number of key foreign policy issues on the margins that might be decided in the Soviet Union's favor by resort to disinformation. It is easy to appreciate this objective even if it is hard to evaluate the success of U.S. efforts. For this reason, most working group members were content to characterize their impact using the modest “water on stone” analogy that suggested little to no immediate impact but significant results over the long term.

We do not have systematic studies of overseas public opinion before and after working group products and briefings, but we do know that the group received positive feedback from U.S. Information Service posts and foreign sources. We also have some evidence that the group helped raise the awareness of journalists, not only overseas but also in the United States.⁵⁴³ The *Washington Post's* response to a series of incidents is perhaps illustrative. When the Carter administration first raised the issue of an embarrassing forgery without specifying the Soviet Union as the likely source, the *Post* assumed it might have originated in the Reagan campaign. Years later, when the *Post* reported that the Reagan administration had established the working group “to expose Soviet efforts to mislead world opinion about American foreign policy,” it did it in a way that suggested it was much ado about nothing. It noted in its opening sentence that the Reagan administration established the working group “amid reports about the administration's misuse of the press to deceive Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi,”⁵⁴⁴ clearly implying “everyone does it.” However, by the time the Soviets launched a forgery against Romerstein in

1986, he was able to show the *Post* why it was a forgery and turn the *Post* article into a detailed exposé on Soviet forgeries in general.

The same type of result occurred overseas when foreign audiences grew more sensitive to Soviet disinformation. When the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, an influential Swiss newspaper, examined the working group's allegation of a Soviet disinformation campaign, it concluded "the American accusation seems more than justified." Sensitized to the possibility of Soviet disinformation, the foreign press was more inclined to check thoroughly before publishing scandalous allegations, particularly when they received documents anonymously. For example, Lucian Heichler recounted in testimony to Congress how an Austrian publication that received a forged document decided to check first with the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. As a result, the Austrian press ended up reporting the incident as an example of Soviet disinformation.⁵⁴⁵ While the working group could not take exclusive credit for heightened press awareness of Soviet disinformation, its public reports, conferences, and informal outreach to journalists made a contribution.⁵⁴⁶ As Kux liked to note, "no one likes to be duped," perhaps especially honest journalists.

It is also clear that the working group was a good return on investment. As the Department of State made clear in correspondence to a concerned Congressman, "one of the objectives . . . was to maximize current resources without placing additional information-collection requirements on any agency."⁵⁴⁷ The group's public reports cost a few thousand dollars to produce and the work of fewer than 20 part-time U.S. Government employees (albeit some highly committed ones).⁵⁴⁸ These costs of exposing Soviet disinformation were insignificant compared to the large Soviet bureaucracy that created and distributed the disinformation. However much the Soviets spent on creating disinformation, exposing it cost much less. In this respect, the small working group had a disproportionate impact, one far exceeding the costs of manning the group, producing its reports, and disseminating them overseas in its "road shows."

In short, the working group was productive, effective, and disproportionately efficient. Its achievements especially stand out in comparison with those of other small interagency groups. Virtually every source interviewed made a point of contrasting the group's high productivity with other interagency groups they led or participated on. The Active Measures Working Group was an interagency group that worked, and that alone is considered unusual. Moreover, the group endured, showing remarkable resiliency. It persisted through numerous leadership and environmental changes, including the departure of many of its most ardent supporters following the Iran-Contra scandal;⁵⁴⁹ it even managed to keep going through the decline and fall of the Soviet Union, although at a much reduced capacity and level of effectiveness. The group was

subject-matter centered, and managed to incorporate a wide range of experts from all levels of government, which is not at all the bureaucratic norm.

While the Active Measures Working Group was an unusually successful small interagency group, it had some notable limitations when compared to the performance associated with high performing teams in organizational literature.⁵⁵⁰ Its leaders and members did not work together full-time nor were they collocated. More importantly, members did not support the team's mission at the expense of their parent organization's equities when the two could not be reconciled (for example, on declassification issues and the value of institutionalizing capacity within INR, which alienated USIA). The group did develop a team culture and decisionmaking norms, but many members had trouble thinking of the group as a decisionmaking body and instead characterized it as an information-sharing enterprise. Many of its products were drafted primarily by INR personnel, with input from others. When State could or would not provide deputy assistant secretary-level leadership, the group's productivity fell significantly. For these and other reasons, the working group would not meet the defining attributes or performance standards that organizational experts typically associate with good "teams."

Observations

Since the Active Measures Working Group's record of effectiveness contrasts sharply with the poor performance so often attributed to small interagency groups, it naturally raises the question of why it was able to succeed where so many others failed. Having previously examined the 10 performance variables in detail, we can now compare and assess them for their relative efficacy as explanations for the working group's productivity.

At the organizational level, it seems clear that senior leader support was a necessary prerequisite for the working group's existence and thus its performance. Senior leaders did more than just initiate the effort; they sustained it. Congressional leaders intervened to levy a requirement for working group products, promoted those products, and lobbied for institutionalized capability for the products. Within the executive branch, all the way up to and including the President, who was widely known to favor the kind of work the group was doing, the group had supporters. Without them, the group would have been greatly handicapped, ignored, or disbanded outright. Other groups in the same time period that did not enjoy senior leader support met this fate. For example, in 1981, Mark Palmer created an interagency working group on Soviet nationalities in hopes of promoting democratization. Although ostensibly consistent with Reagan administration policy objectives, its output (papers and recommendations) was ignored by unsupportive senior officials, and the group met a quiet demise.⁵⁵¹ Other interagency groups

set up in the Reagan administration met perfunctorily to humor political appointees, but then quietly disbanded when those officials departed.⁵⁵²

High-level political support was a prerequisite for the group's existence, but it far from guaranteed success. In fact, it is easy to overstate the importance of senior leader support. The working group was just one of many interagency beachheads in Reagan's war on the bureaucracy, most of which were initiated and supported by senior leaders but nonetheless failed in the face of bureaucratic resistance (as indicated in the brief historical overview of diverse Reagan administration intelligence and public diplomacy reform efforts). Rarely has a President entered office with so much political support and an agenda so much at odds with the predilections of the national security establishment. Indeed, it was "almost legendary for its concentrated assaults on the bureaucracy," in part because of "the significant departure of its policy initiatives from the status quo."⁵⁵³ In such an environment, the working group benefited from senior leader support for its activities, but it also had to be particularly careful not to elicit a backlash from career officials irritated by the Reagan agenda and unsympathetic with its mission. Political support from on high could be a double-edged sword.⁵⁵⁴

In the face of such resistance, the administration had to tread carefully. It launched many small interagency groups but allowed them to proceed with great autonomy, doing what they thought best and finding their own way forward (see textbox 7). The bureaucracy could not simply be bludgeoned into submission for several reasons, not least because those holding up progress in interagency groups often were either loyal political appointees themselves or reported directly to President Reagan's most senior political appointees, including Cabinet officials. The widely recognized differences of opinion between Weinberger and Shultz, for example, were similar to those between Carter senior officials such as National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Reagan, like Carter, was reluctant to intervene and settle squabbles; he would not take Cabinet leaders "to the woodshed" for failing to collaborate—much to the frustration of NSC staff trying to forge unity on interagency groups.⁵⁵⁵ In practice, this meant interagency groups typically would not receive an undue portion of Presidential support even when the President highly valued their contributions.

In the case of the Active Measures Working Group, this meant that senior leaders demonstrated support by their attendance (periodic or sustained), but they did not define the group's purpose explicitly, delegate special authorities, or provide dedicated resources (the small INR office created under pressure from Congress never got off the ground and was not a working group asset). In short, the working group had the best wishes of senior leaders, but not a lot of overt intervention to smooth the way to success. Therefore, to explain why the group operated

Textbox 7. Specialization and Integration in the Reagan Administration

In revamping U.S.-Soviet relations, the Reagan team faced two problems common to all incoming administrations: It had to bend strong departments and agencies to its will, and it had to integrate diverse efforts in pursuit of larger strategy goals. Like all new administrations, Reagan placed political appointees in both standing and ad hoc positions of authority in order to establish his policy preferences through a variety of special projects, programs, task forces, and working groups—most but not all of them with interagency representation. These diverse efforts potentially brought great amounts of specialized knowledge to bear on specific problems. However, as the number of such initiatives increased, the difficulty of integrating them to good effect in support of larger strategy objectives also increased. Reagan struggled with such cross-departmental coordination, as have all modern Presidents,¹ but generally he relied on the collegiality of his senior political appointees.

Reagan's public diplomacy campaign in support of new intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe is a case in point. In 1979, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) asked for new American missiles and agreed to deploy them, but popular European political support fell apart as the Soviet Union ran a \$100 million (estimated) propaganda campaign against the missiles.² The Reagan administration launched a full-court press to reverse the situation. Multiple entities were established for this purpose: a special Cabinet-level planning and coordinating committee, four separate subordinate committees to oversee diverse public diplomacy efforts by the Department of State,³ United States Information Agency (USIA), U.S. Ambassador to NATO David Abshire,⁴ and a separate special committee under Peter Dailey, Reagan's advertising manager in the 1980 election and at that time the Ambassador to Ireland.

Ambassador Dailey spent most of his time in Europe where he coordinated directly with prime ministers and foreign and defense ministers, or in the White House corridors where he enlisted the assistance of Vice President George H.W. Bush and kept National Security Advisor William Clark informed. Among other things, Dailey wanted U.S. officials to stop using "zero option" to characterize the administration's INF position and instead talk about "Reagan's proposal to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth." He realized that the characterization was awkward but believed it drew the average citizen's attention away from weapons to the desire for peace.⁵

Textbox 7. Specialization and Integration in the Reagan Administration (cont.)

What is striking about Dailey's work in retrospect is how autonomous it was.⁶ Dailey only reported to Clark. He did not coordinate with USIA Director Charles Wick, even though he found USIA supportive of his proposed messages. He ignored the top levels of the Department of State and had no idea that Dennis Kux and his Active Measures Working Group existed nearby, even though his bureaucratic home was in State's basement.⁷ His effort was so removed from State's daily activities that no one thought to notify him when a blizzard suddenly materialized and shut down most of Washington, DC. A secretary dispatched for coffee discovered that the department was abandoned and snowed in.⁸ Ultimately, with Dailey's help, the administration's INF campaign was successful, and it serves as a benign example of the diverse and often ad hoc specialized interagency structures that the Reagan administration created to move its foreign policy agenda forward.

There were many other semiautonomous efforts as well, including the Active Measures Working Group. The administration did not treat these initiatives as "fire and forget" missiles, but as the Dailey example illustrates, they did enjoy a degree of autonomy that made supervising and integrating them all a major challenge. In the case of Oliver North's Iran-Contra project, it was later determined that oversight was inadequate, to say the least. The "initiative ran directly counter to the Administration's own policies [and was] not adequately vetted below the cabinet level."⁹ Failure to integrate the Iran-Contra project with larger administration priorities led to a scandal that severely damaged the administration and forced the departure of many National Security Council staff members who were most supportive of the Active Measures Working Group.

¹ David Mitchell, *Making Foreign Policy: Presidential Management of the Decision-Making Process* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 18; and John P. Burke, *The Institutional Presidency* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 144ff.

² For the political impact of public opinion on this issue, see Christopher J. Lamb, "Public Opinion and Nuclear Weapons in Europe, *NATO Review* (December 1981).

³ These efforts included Mark Palmer's interagency group.

⁴ Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past, CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009), 32, available at <<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/publications/perspectives/CPDPerspectivesLessons.pdf>>. Abshire worked closely with Stanton Burnett of the United States Information Agency and also brought in Mike Moody to run his public relations campaign in Europe.

Textbox 7. Specialization and Integration in the Reagan Administration (cont.)

⁵ Peter Dailey, phone interview with authors, April 8, 2011; and George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner's, 1993).

⁶ Dailey, phone interview.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ With no cabs running, Dailey's small group prevailed upon a contact in the mortuary business to dispatch a heavy hearse they thought might make it through the snow, but before it could arrive they were rescued by less macabre transportation from a limousine service. Dailey, phone interview.

⁹ John G. Tower, Edmund S. Muskie, and Brent Scowcroft, *The Tower Commission Report: The Full Text of the President's Special Review Board* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); cited in John P. Burke, "The Neutral/Honest Broker Role in Foreign-Policy Decision Making: a Reassessment," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2005): 235.

quickly and effectively without bureaucratic blockage, unlike so many other Reagan-era intelligence and public diplomacy initiatives, we must look to other variables.

Group-level variables play a role in explaining working group performance. The group early on developed a good structure based on the right kinds of expertise to tackle a limited problem (blatant disinformation, particularly forgeries) in an "end-to-end" fashion (the RAP method). However, the working group's performance was heavily influenced by individual-level variables such as composition and leadership. What made the group special were exceptional leadership and uniquely knowledgeable individuals such as Romerstein, who constituted a national treasure of sorts. Kux and Bailey were especially competent leaders; one was a career Foreign Service Officer who was an activist with an unusual penchant for problem-solving, and the other was a political appointee with much practical wisdom about working within organizational limits. Romerstein, Spaulding, Milburn, and others were among the Nation's foremost experts in their areas of expertise, or soon became so (for example, Hertzberg). Often departments and agencies send busy midlevel managers to interagency groups who are inclined to protect organizational equities, but the Active Measures Working Group had the benefit of extremely knowledgeable personnel who were unusually committed to the mission.

It is not possible to generalize from a single case with confidence, so identifying factors that helped the Active Measures Working Group succeed cannot be considered a rigid recipe for success. Moreover, the working group's most conspicuous assets—exceptional leadership and unusually dedicated subject matter experts—are, by definition, hard to secure. Other

factors that helped the group perform at a high level will be difficult to replicate (see textbox 8). However, they are worth identifying because they best explain the working group's success and because they are not impossible to follow. Leaders of typical small interagency groups aspiring to high performance should at least pay attention to them:

- Secure senior leader support for the group, particularly from the agency that controls the group's chair—it is a prerequisite for effectiveness.⁵⁵⁶
- Conduct business in a way that serves national interests, distinct from the organization's equities—doing so reduces bureaucratic resistance.
- Conceptualize the group's purpose in an end-to-end mission approach that focuses the group on outcomes if possible—and it will not always be possible.
- Do not define the group's purpose in a way that exceeds available political support, which must be attended to on a regular basis.
- Do not squelch substantive differences of opinion, which are a sign of vitality and potential innovation—manage them productively.
- Recruit expertise committed to the work of the group, regardless of rank, particularly if doing so helps offset resistance to the group's agenda from other sources.
- Shoot for small successes and build on them. It is more difficult to restrain or shut down a group that has an established record of success.

These dos and don'ts must be applied as circumstances dictate. Given the constraints of the current system, it is hard to overstate the importance of interagency group leaders who are willing to take prudent bureaucratic risks and find their own way forward depending on circumstances.

Textbox 8. Succeeding in a “Normal” Interagency Group

The Active Measure Working Group was a normal small interagency group in most respects: It had no special authorities or dedicated resources, it only met periodically, its representatives were subject to control by their parent organizations, and it made decisions by consensus. Yet it produced unusually good results. This anomaly can be explained in part by its great leadership and dedicated subject matter experts, but there were other factors that helped the group perform at a high level that should be highlighted.

Top Cover in a Hostile Lead Agency. Small interagency groups often are chaired by a representative from a “lead agency.” If representatives from other organizations believe that the chair is favoring the lead organization’s agenda, they offer resistance that makes it difficult for the group to fulfill its purpose.¹ Alternatively, if for any reason the lead agency does want the group to succeed, it is a relatively simple matter for the chair to stymie the working group until the political requirement for it disappears. The Active Measures Working Group was a serendipitous combination of these two unhappy alternatives. The Department of State generally was not supportive of the group, but its chairs and several influential State leaders were. As long as these State working group chairs could protect the group and lead it well, they earned the trust and cooperation of representatives from other agencies who, for the most part, believed the chairs were acting in the national interest rather than that of State.² This unusual condition helped the group coalesce and function at a high level.

Modest End-to-end Mission Definition. The definition of Soviet active measures is vague. Therefore, it would have been easy to construe the working group’s mission so broadly that completing it would have exceeded the group’s political and substantive capacity. However, the group’s “report-analyze-publicize” (RAP) methodology in effect limited its mission to countering Soviet influence operations that could be exposed in a compelling way with unclassified or declassified information. The RAP approach also inclined the group to be accountable for output. The approach was a simple “end-to-end” mission concept, meaning the group did not just establish “policy” or “coordinate planning.” Instead, it identified problems and courses of action to resolve them, and then executed the best option. If the group did a poor job of analyzing a case, it was more likely to be discredited when it went public. With the RAP approach, the group held itself accountable for actual results and put itself in a position to learn from what did and did

Textbox 8. Succeeding in a “Normal” Interagency Group (cont.)

not work well. This modest but holistic approach had several advantages. The working group could concentrate on cases it considered “clear winners.” It thus insulated itself from higher risk activities and stayed within the boundaries of what was tolerable to State. The limited mission also had the advantage of requiring few resources. No special authorities, finances, or capabilities beyond expert knowledge were needed to expose the Soviet lies and subterfuges it targeted. Thus, cooperation from other departments and agencies was more likely.

Committed Experts. A typical interagency group cannot control its membership. The department and agencies send who they will—typically managers from the relevant subject area who are of equal or lesser rank than the group’s chair. However, the Active Measure Working Group found ways to attract dedicated experts irrespective of rank. Dennis Kux set the tone by researching the topic and demonstrating that he was open to hearing from anyone with expertise, including Soviet defectors and congressional staffers. The group attracted the highest officials, such as Stanton Burnett, but also far less experienced personnel such as David Hertzberg. They were welcomed because they were able to contribute. Career civil servants dedicated to the group’s purpose and representing important organizations such as the Department of Defense and U.S. Information Agency helped offset the reluctance of agencies such as State and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to take action. The presence of career experts also helped insulate the group from charges of “political extremism.”

These characteristics were important catalysts for success in the case of the Active Measures Working Group, but it is not clear that they could be easily emulated by others. Much depends on the purpose of the interagency group. For example, before positioning a working group in a hostile agency, one would first have to find or make allies of key officials in that agency that would be in a position to offer the group support and protection. The ability to do so would depend greatly on what the group was trying to accomplish, and to some extent on external circumstances (recalling that the Soviet Union’s own behavior made a significant impact on “moderates” in State). Similarly, some missions are much more difficult than others to conceptualize in an end-to-end mission methodology that is practical and results-oriented. Finally, with so many departments and agencies currently emphasizing the value of generalists and requiring their personnel to move from one subject area to another, deep subject matter expertise is not as readily available as it once might have been, although this too depends on the mission in question.

Textbox 8. Succeeding in a “Normal” Interagency Group (cont.)

¹ In the words of one seasoned National Security Council staffer, “lead agency means sole agency” since the other organizations will not follow the lead agency. See Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), *Forging a New Shield* (Washington, DC: PNSR, 2008), 160.

² This point was made well in a study of Country Team performance, which cited the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel to the effect that “other agencies often view the Ambassador as the Department [of State’s] representative, rather than the President’s.” See Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey, *The Country Team: Restructuring America’s First Line of Engagement* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, September 2007).

Conclusion

*In responding to disinformation, the United States has the tremendous advantage that the truth is inherently more powerful than lies. But if the lies go unchallenged, then they can have a damaging effect.*⁵⁵⁷

—Charles Wick, 1988

Although it put out its last report more than two decades ago, the Active Measures Working Group remains a noteworthy case for several reasons. It played an interesting and previously little-known role in the Cold War struggle. Describing its history well makes a contribution to Cold War history. The working group’s experience also is useful for generating insights about small interagency group performance. Among other things, it demonstrates that it is possible for these groups to be effective.

The working group might just have met periodically to call attention to the problem of Soviet disinformation or, at best, to establish some weak policy guidelines for responding to it. Instead, the group became the recognized center of expertise and guidance on disinformation and a force for public awareness of Soviet disinformation and active measures. The group made the Soviet Union pay a political price for disinformation that reverberated all the way to the top of the Soviet political apparatus—in part by producing reports that authoritatively exposed covert Soviet influence operations against U.S. interests, and in part by sensitizing foreign audiences to how often they were being duped. Within the United States, the group was highly regarded for the overall number and quality of products it produced—“a shining example of what could be done with non-kinetic resistance to the [Soviet Union]”—both in Congress and the executive branch.⁵⁵⁸ Overseas, the group’s work encouraged allies and frustrated the Soviets. And it did all this at little cost to the United States.

Given the prominent role that small interagency groups play in the national security system, it is important to know how and under what conditions they can be effective. This study makes a contribution to understanding small interagency groups in two ways. It identifies the factors that best explain the success of the Active Measures Working Group, and it illustrates how difficult and unusual it is for small groups to succeed in the current system.

This last point bears emphasis. The current national security system is not conducive to small interagency group success. The Active Measures Working Group was an exceptional case, not the rule. Even with much senior leader support, it had to proceed cautiously. Its singular moment of triumph—when Gorbachev complained about its report—was also a moment of great peril. The report irritated Secretary Shultz. He could have taken vigorous action to put pressure on the group's leaders, but instead he just let it be known that he did not want another such report produced.⁵⁵⁹ Congress then transferred the lead for producing the report to USIA.⁵⁶⁰ As the 9/11 Commission observed, in the current national security system, departments and agencies have more authority to block attempts to integrate their activities than others do to overcome their resistance.⁵⁶¹ Senior leaders can launch interagency groups, but they cannot guarantee their success (unless, presumably, the President gets involved). Instead, they must try to find “policy entrepreneurs” to lead them—people capable of taking prudent risks and working around the system to forge whatever level of integrated effort is possible. As the generally poor reputation of interagency groups attests, such an approach to interagency integration cannot produce consistently good performance.⁵⁶²

This case study illustrates another limitation of the current national security system: it cannot integrate well the diverse interagency efforts that it initiates. In the case of the Active Measures Working Group, its impact was magnified by the fact that the Reagan administration was using it as just one tool in a larger strategic communications effort, which in turn was part of a larger strategy for putting pressure on the Soviet Union. However, the Reagan administration, like all post-World War II administrations, had trouble integrating its many national security efforts. Some believe the Reagan administration had a more cohesive strategy than most. As the Able Archer example indicates, however, integrating disparate efforts across the national security system to create desired strategic effects is difficult, and the unintended consequences of failure can be grave.

In this regard, it is sobering that some of America's most distinguished foreign policy practitioners believe that the United States is actually increasingly *less* able to generate coherent national security and foreign policy because the national security system is not keeping pace with an increasingly complex security environment.⁵⁶³ Lawrence Eagleburger, for example, has remarked: “Going into the 21st century is going to be very difficult, because we're not capable of managing those complexities with any great skill. In my judgment, even in the 20-some years

I was in the State Department, we went downhill in that regard; by the time I retired from the Department, we were less capable of coherence than we were when I entered.”⁵⁶⁴

The working group’s experience also offers several lessons about strategic communications of contemporary value. In general, the U.S. Government’s experience with the Active Measures Working Group illustrates the extent to which the importance of strategic communications is a function of larger worldviews. Scholars of international relations study the links between capabilities and intentions and how each is communicated to various audiences (that is, respectively, elements of national power, grand strategy, and strategic communications⁵⁶⁵). The events leading up to NATO’s Able Archer exercise and the Soviet reaction to it again admirably illustrate the importance of strategic communications and its interrelationship with capabilities and intentions. How a nation communicates—or miscommunicates—its strategic capabilities and intentions and how they are perceived can be as important as the objective truth.⁵⁶⁶ As the best source on Able Archer concludes, “even fear based on a false threat can create real dangers.”⁵⁶⁷ Given the uncertainties involved, it is easy to see why leaders appreciate intelligence that can offer direct feedback on how their strategic communications are being interpreted, including spies inside their adversary’s bureaucracy. Then-CIA Deputy Director Robert Gates later observed that “the most terrifying thing about Able Archer is that we may have been at the brink of nuclear war and not even known about it.”⁵⁶⁸ Nations need the best possible feedback on the effects of their strategic communications, and preferably from multiple sources. With this thought in mind and reacting to American indignation over Soviet electronic bugging of the new U.S. Embassy in Moscow, an exasperated Gorbachev justified espionage for its contribution to “stability.”⁵⁶⁹

Even so, there is a wide range of views on the relative importance of capabilities, intentions, and strategic communications in national security. Intelligence traditionalists, for example, tend to emphasize the importance of communications for their impact on perceptions. They believe that strategic deception (the overtly deceitful side of strategic communication) is critically important, and that every effort must be made to manage our understanding of adversary intentions and to communicate our own intentions in a way that builds political support for U.S. interests. They are much more likely to conclude, therefore, that dedicated organization, including interagency organization, is necessary to defeat an adversary’s deception and disinformation efforts.

Others with a different worldview (and this might be said of those who instituted intelligence reforms in the 1970s) are more concerned about actual capabilities, particularly the need to rely upon and safeguard the inherent strength of U.S. institutions. They believe that staying true to our own values will send a larger, more reassuring message to the world than public diplomacy can. Still others would not choose between strategic capabilities and strategic communications, but would emphasize one more than the other depending upon circumstances.

In short, the importance of strategic communications in general and the need to counter disinformation in particular depend to some extent on one's assessment of threats and opportunities in the international environment. This was certainly true in the early 1980s when the Reagan administration acted upon the growing consensus that the United States needed to do a better job of countering Soviet disinformation. The Active Measures Working Group reflected that shift in strategic thinking. However, the consensus did not extend to Soviet active measures as a whole, which was a point of contention in the group. Moreover, when the consensus on the need to meet a heightened threat disappeared, so did support for robust counter-disinformation efforts (even though inertia carried the effort forward into the 1990s).

Today, some former members of the working group wonder whether a more robust effort such as the one they pioneered in the 1980s could save the United States embarrassment (by avoiding missteps like having the President lend credence to the Niger uranium forgeries in the runup to the Iraq war) and better prepare it to defend itself from strategic deceptions practiced by rising regional powers such as China. The Active Measures Working Group experience suggests the President would have to make the case to the public on the need for the effort and mobilize his senior leadership for the same purpose. Government management of information is a sensitive issue that must be justified to the public and to a skeptical news media. The Active Measures Working Group was only possible because it was clear that President Reagan supported aggressive and sustained public diplomacy. A current effort with similar aspirations would require a similar level of support.

From the authors' point of view, America's current circumstances argue for strategic communications supported by special organizations and integrated into a larger strategy for victory. However, we acknowledge the value of this proposition is not self-evident. Strategic communications are intrinsically difficult and controversial. Now as then, U.S. leaders debate whether defeating a global enemy requires a counter-disinformation effort and a dedicated interagency effort to support it. Now, as then, strong voices in American leadership circles doubt the importance of dedicated strategic communications.

For example, an essay by Admiral Mike Mullen, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, makes a powerful argument that America has lost its way on strategic communications. Admiral Mullen argues against specialized organizations and in favor of letting America communicate its strategic intent through its actions and normal coordination processes: "By organizing to it—creating whole structures around it—we have allowed strategic communication to become a thing instead of a process. . . . It is now sadly a cottage industry."⁵⁷⁰ Admiral Mullen argues that if we make good policy and ensure our actions are consistent with the policy, we will not need a special effort to sell our image abroad: "For all the instant polling, market analysis,

and focus groups we employ today, we could learn a lot by looking to our own past.” Citing the Great White Fleet, Marshall Plan, and other historical events, Admiral Mullen argues the United States communicated its strategic intent “primarily through the power of our example. . . . We didn’t need a public opinion poll. . . . We didn’t need a ‘strat comms’ plan. . . . Americans simply showed up and did the right thing, because it was, well, the right thing.” The greatest threat to our image, he argues, is when “our words don’t align with our actions.” In this regard, he believes, “most strategic communication problems are not communication problems at all. They are policy and execution problems. Each time we fail to live up to our values or don’t follow up on a promise, we look more and more like the arrogant Americans the enemy claims we are.”

There is no doubt that actions can speak louder than words. It is also true that, on occasion, U.S. behavior transparently communicates a clear intent and does not require and cannot benefit from interpretation—but not often. Frequently, others inadvertently misinterpret or willfully misrepresent U.S. behavior and intentions. “The voyage of the Great White Fleet told the world the United States was no longer a second-rate nation,” Admiral Mullen writes, but it also was so open to misinterpretation that the fleet’s commander observed it might end in “a feast, a frolic or a fight.”⁵⁷¹ The announcement of the cruise whipped up “a first-class war scare” in Japan and the United States that was only defused by careful diplomacy on both sides. The Marshall Plan was similarly open to interpretation. Some believe that the Soviets saw it “as a declaration of war by the United States for control of Europe” that “precipitated a dramatic shift in Soviet foreign policy.”⁵⁷² However benign our behavior seems to us, it helps to explain it to others. Presuming our actions are self-evidently the right thing to do may strike others as more arrogant than the reality that our deeds sometimes fail to live up to our ideals.

The Reagan administration understood that its behavior had to be explained to foreign audiences. When we lost control of the message, and others defined our intent, as the Soviets did with the neutron bomb and initially for INF modernization, it was politically impossible to proceed with action that served U.S. and allied interests. Only a sustained, concerted effort to communicate American intent and frame the issue correctly reversed the situation and allowed the modernization of NATO’s deterrent forces to proceed. The intent behind American deployment of new nuclear weapons in Europe did not speak for itself; it required interpretation.

Today, American enemies still do their best to turn benign actions into sinister plots. In Nigeria, rumors circulated that a 2003 polio eradication campaign was really an American plot to sterilize Muslims.⁵⁷³ We can scoff at the absurdity of that rumor, but as the Soviets proved, the “big lie” can take root, gain amazingly widespread acceptance, and so alter political relationships that it restricts our options for protecting American interests. For example, some experts

believe that Iranian communication strategies have dominated the portrayal of U.S. force presence in Iraq. Even though the overwhelming majority of Iraqi political leaders privately believe some U.S. forces should stay on to safeguard Iraqi independence, few will dare say so publicly because the Iranian regime and its proxies have succeeded in poisoning the well on the issue.

Many Americans share Admiral Mullen's convictions that actions speak louder than words and do not require a strategic communications bureaucracy for their interpretation. To the extent this position is based on faith in the inherent strength of American institutions, it is inspiring. To the extent it reflects frustration over poorly coordinated and poorly performing organizations currently trying to do strategic communications, it is understandable. To the extent it relies on "getting back to basics" and "looking to our past," it is mistaken. American history illustrates the importance of all three basic building blocks for national security: strong U.S. capabilities, good intentions, and the effective communication of both to diverse audiences. The U.S. experience with the Active Measures Working Group supports that conclusion as well as several others:

- Against a serious threat that can challenge the United States both physically and philosophically, effective strategic communications are critical.
- It takes deep and diverse expertise from multiple organizations to conduct effective strategic communications, so interagency collaboration is a must.
- It is easy to misstep and fall behind with strategic communications, so managing the message well and providing quick responses require full-time, dedicated organizations (which the standing bureaucracy abhors).
- Although strategic communications are costly and challenging, the United States must be engaged for the long haul in order to have an impact.

In short, because terrorists are intent on attacking the United States and its allies wherever possible and with anything possible, including weapons of mass destruction, and can further their agenda in part by offering a hostile narrative about the United States, we need to emphasize strategic communications more rather than less. It is true that the American example is a great one and that the world is often indebted to the United States for its expenditures of blood and treasure. But it is also true that our actions and intentions, even when strategically and morally sound, will not always be easily recognized as such by foreign audiences, which is why the image of a great nation needs its custodians, and those custodians need a good organization to support them.

Appendix: Working Group Products

Note: What follows is a chronological list of public products from the Active Measures Working Group. Most Foreign Affairs Notes and Special Reports were 4 to 8 pages with the longest 12 pages. Major reports were closer to 100 pages. We include two public products in this list for which we cannot determine the exact amount of working group involvement. We believe the group drafted Lawrence Eagleburger's *NATO Review* article on Soviet active measures, and we believe the group or group members likely assisted with William Casey's 1985 public address on the topic, which mentions the working group and is disseminated as a Department of State Current Policy product. Following Dennis Kux's departure, there were no more special reports. Following David Hertzberg's departure, there were no more Foreign Affairs Notes.

1981

Soviet Active Measures: Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations. Special Report 88. October 1981.

1982

Expulsion of Soviet Representatives from Foreign Countries, 1970–81. Foreign Affairs Note. February 1982.

World Peace Council: Instrument of Soviet Foreign Policy. Foreign Affairs Note. April 1982.

Religion in the U.S.S.R.: Laws, Policy, and Propaganda. Foreign Affairs Note. May 1982.

Soviet Active Measures: An Update. Special Report 101. July 1982.

Moscow's Radio Peace and Progress. Foreign Affairs Note. August 1982.

Communist Clandestine Broadcasting. Foreign Affairs Note. December 1982.

1983

Lawrence Eagleburger. "Unacceptable Intervention: Soviet Active Measures." *NATO Review* 31, no. 1 (April 1983), 6–11.

Expulsions of Soviet Officials Worldwide, 1982. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1983.

Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries. Foreign Affairs Note. April 1983.

The World Peace Council's "Peace Assemblies". Foreign Affairs Note. May 1983.

Lawrence Eagleburger. "Unacceptable Intervention: Soviet Active Measures." Department of State Bulletin #2077, August 1983, 45–49. Reprinted from *NATO Review* 31, no. 1 (1983).

World Federation of Trade Unions: Soviet Foreign Policy Tool. Foreign Affairs Note. August 1983.

Soviet Active Measures. Special Report 110. September 1983.

1984

Expulsions of Soviets Worldwide, 1983. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1984.

“Soviet Active Measures.” An Address by William E. Knepper, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau for Intelligence and Research, before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, *Current Policy*, no. 595 (May 30, 1984).

Soviet Fronts: Women and Youth. Foreign Affairs Note. July 1984.

1985

Expulsions of Soviets Worldwide, 1984. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1985.

Soviet Active Measures: The World Peace Council. Foreign Affairs Note. April 1985.

Soviet Active Measures: Christian Peace Conference. Foreign Affairs Note. May 1985.

Soviet Active Measures: The 12th World Youth Festival in Moscow. Foreign Affairs Note. June 1985.

Contemporary Soviet Propaganda and Disinformation: A Conference Report. June 1985. (Note: although members of the working group participated in this conference and it was dubbed a Department of State–Central Intelligence Agency–sponsored conference, it may have been organized for the most part by the classified National Security Council working group on active measures.)

“Soviet Use of Active Measures.” An address by William J. Casey, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, to the Dallas Council on World Affairs. *Current Policy*, no. 761 (September 18, 1985).

Update: The 12th World Youth Festival in Moscow. Foreign Affairs Note. December 1985. (Note: at 12 pages, this is the longest Foreign Affairs Note.)

1986

Expulsions of Soviets Worldwide, 1985. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1986.

August, 1986. Congressional Report: *Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-U.S. Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns.* Congressional Report. August 1986. (Note: 83 pages)

Recent Anti-American Forgeries. Foreign Affairs Note. November 1986.

1987

Expulsion of Soviet Officials, 1986. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1987.

Moscow and the Peace Movement: The Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace. Foreign Affairs Note. May 1987.

“Disinformation, The Media, and Foreign Policy.” Conference Report. May 1987.

Recent Anti-American Forgeries: An Update. Foreign Affairs Note. July 1987.

The U.S.S.R.'s AIDS Disinformation Campaign. Foreign Affairs Note. July 1987.

August, 1987. Congressional Report: *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986–1987.* Congressional Report. August 1987. (Note: 89 pages)

1988

Expulsions of Soviet Officials, 1987. Foreign Affairs Note. January 1988.

Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost. United States Information Agency Report. March 1988.

1989

Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1987–1988. Department of State Report. August 1989.

Notes

¹ United States Information Agency (USIA), *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, report presented to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, March 8, 1988.

² George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner's, 1993), 997–998; “Little Report, With the Right Spin, Makes a Big Splash,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 1987, A32.

³ Shultz, 997–998.

⁴ George P. Shultz, interview, *Meet the Press*, October 25, 1987; David K. Shipler, “What Happened in Moscow? Shultz Offers inside Account,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 1987.

⁵ “Little Report, With the Right Spin.”

⁶ Herbert Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group: Successful Template for Strategic Influence,” in *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda and Political Warfare*, ed. J.M. Waller, 203 (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2008). Romerstein originally published his account of the working group as “Disinformation as a KGB Weapon in the Cold War,” *The Journal of Intelligence History* 1, no 1 (Summer 2001), 54–67. Subsequently, it has been edited and republished by the Institute of World Politics.

⁷ Thomas Boghardt, “Active Measures. The Russian Art of Disinformation,” available at <www.spymuseum.org/active-measures-russian-art-disinformation>.

⁸ The enduring nature of Soviet AIDS disinformation is a case in point and well illustrated in Thomas Boghardt, “Operation INFEKTION: Soviet Bloc Intelligence and Its AIDS Disinformation Campaign,” *Studies in Intelligence* 53, no. 4 (December 2009).

⁹ See James Douglas Orton and Christopher J. Lamb, “Interagency National Security Teams: Can Social Science Contribute?” *PRISM* 2, no. 2 (March 2011).

¹⁰ Cited in Boghardt, 1. Wagenbreth is giving a lecture to Department X recruits in 1986, as recorded in Gunter Bohnsak and Herbert Brehmer, *Auftrag. Ireefuhrung: Wie die Stasi Politik im Westen machte* (Hamburg: Carlsen, 1992), 19.

¹¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), *Soviet Active Measures in the United States, 1986–1987* (Washington, DC: FBI, June 1987), 1. Some assert that Soviet defector Stanislav Levchenko explained to Americans that the KGB knew the United States was catching on to deception and disinformation, so they changed the term to the more generic active measures. Interviewee 18, a senior intelligence official, May 13, 2011.

¹² Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 2.

¹³ Herbert Romerstein, *Soviet Active Measures and Propaganda: “New Thinking” & Influence Activities in the Gorbachev Era* (Toronto: Mackenzie Institute for the Study of Terrorism, Revolution, and Propaganda, 1989), 5.

¹⁴ Alleged Soviet support for terrorism and assassination have been controversial topics for ideological and diplomatic reasons. However, defectors such as Ladislav Bittman have detailed many of these Soviet activities in their memoirs and books. See Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁶ Romerstein, *Soviet Active Measures and Propaganda*, 28–29. Gorbachev notes in his memoirs, however, that Politburo members did not have the full picture on the KGB and that delving into its activities “was entirely off-limits.” See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 204.

¹⁷ FBI, *Soviet Active Measures*, 2.

¹⁸ Adda B. Bozemann, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1991).

¹⁹ It was called the Soviet Political Action Working Group.

²⁰ Senate Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, *Organizing for National Security*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

²² Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), *Forging a New Shield* (Washington, DC: PNSR, 2008).

²³ John P. Burke, *The Institutional Presidency* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 144.

²⁴ Brigadier General Walter Jajko, USAF (Ret.), interview by authors, April 13, 2011.

²⁵ Kathleen Bailey, phone interview by authors, March 3, 2011.

²⁶ Stanton Burnett, phone interview by authors, April 20, 2011.

²⁷ Jajko, interview.

²⁸ Lucas Fischer, email message to authors, August 21, 2011.

²⁹ David Tucker, *Skirmishes at the Edge of Empire: The United States and International Terrorism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 125. Similarly, interviewee 21, a member of the Active Measures Working Group, worked on interagency counternarcotics and overhead imagery groups with members who exhibited high dedication to working toward common goals. Interviewee 21, email message to authors, September 2, 2011.

³⁰ Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), 25.

³¹ Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 133.

³² *Ibid.*, 949.

³³ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 199.

³⁴ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 285–287. For an up-to-date account, insider, and sympathetic review of CHAOS, see Frank J. Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS: The CIA’s Campaign against the Radical New Left and the Black Panthers* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011).

³⁵ Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Final report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 1976, Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, 699.

³⁶ John T. Elliff, *The Reform of FBI Intelligence Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 40. COINTELPRO was a misnomer. As the Senate later observed, the program’s activities were designed to influence political choices and social values and so amounted to covert action rather than counterintelligence. Ironically, this is exactly what active measures are. See Senate Select Committee, 4.

³⁷ The program began in 1956 in part “because of frustration with Supreme Court rulings limiting the Government’s power to proceed overtly against dissident groups.” See Senate Select Committee, 3.

³⁸ Ronald Kessler, *Inside the CIA: Revealing the Secrets of the World’s Most Powerful Spy Agency* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), 80.

³⁹ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 338.

⁴⁰ “A Look Back: The Landmark Schlesinger Report, 1971,” available at <<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/schlesinger-report.html>>. A redacted version of the report is available through The George Washington University National Security Archives, available at <www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB144/document%204.pdf>.

⁴¹ What follows is largely taken from the short, excellent overview of intelligence by Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 1991).

⁴² Covert action, as defined in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, is “an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly.” In this paper, we use a broader and more common understanding of covert action as “a middle ground between diplomacy and war that involves the secret manipulation of the perceptions of others to induce them to take actions that one sees as in one’s interest.” See *Ibid.*, 97.

⁴³ Harold P. Ford, “William Colby: Retrospect,” available at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/97unclass/colby.html>>.

⁴⁴ Colby as quoted in Shulsky and Schmitt, 164.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁶ For a sympathetic view of the reformers that characterizes the Reagan administration’s intelligence reforms as a politicization of intelligence, see Melvin A. Goodman, *Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 17–18, 79, 122, 151, 326. Those working inside U.S. intelligence at the time believed that the Reagan administration had mounted a “full-out assault” against Soviet analysts and were determined to twist their analysis until it supported administration policy. Interviewee 22, interview with authors, October 3, 2011.

⁴⁷ During Schlesinger’s 6-month tenure in 1973, 500 analysts and 750 clandestine service officers were fired. Later, Stansfield Turner fired another 825 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employees. See “The Nation: Spooked Spooks at the CIA,” *Time*, November 28, 1977.

⁴⁸ Edward J. Epstein, *Deception: The Invisible War between the KGB and the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 98.

⁴⁹ Interviewee 18.

⁵⁰ Epstein, 101.

⁵¹ Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 202.

⁵² House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Soviet Active Measures: Hearings*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 1982, 8; and Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on European Affairs, *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 4, 49.

⁵³ Richard Staar cites Shultz and Godson to the effect that the total Soviet active measures bureaucracy included some 15,000 personnel. See Shultz and Godson, 57, cited in Richard F. Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), 132.

⁵⁴ *Soviet Use of Active Measures, an address by William J. Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, before the Dallas Council on World Affairs, Dallas Texas, September 18, 1985*, Current Policy no. 761 (Washington DC, Department of State, November 1985), 5.

⁵⁵ The book's title was *Oswald: Assassin or Fall-Guy?* See Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 225–226.

⁵⁶ Perhaps they were not above leaking information to the press. In 1979, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak reported on Soviet forgeries based on some classified documents that they reportedly were shown, including a report entitled “The Forgery Offensive” and a report published by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) that proclaimed “Moscow has continually employed forged documents to implement foreign policy.” See Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, “Soviets Intensity Their Forgery Games,” *The Washington Post*, December 5, 1979, A27.

⁵⁷ The episode is recounted in Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group.”

⁵⁸ Some of the academics interested in the topic participated in the April 1979 conference entitled “Intelligence: Deception and Surprise,” which was hosted by the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. The conference focused more on surprise than deception, however, and included scholars such as Roberta Wohlstetter, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Richard Pipes, and Richard Betts.

⁵⁹ Gates, 95.

⁶⁰ Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994), 971.

⁶¹ Jajko, interview.

⁶² “Fake NSC Paper on Africa Is Circulating, Powell Says,” *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1980, A2.

⁶³ Romerstein, “Disinformation,” 65.

⁶⁴ TASS replaying KGB planted stories was standard procedure. They did the same for a KGB story about the United States using germ warfare in the Korean War. Dennis Kux, interview by authors, March 9, 2011.

⁶⁵ “Fake NSC Paper on Africa Is Circulating,” A2.

⁶⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 212.

⁶⁷ John Lenczowski, interview by authors, March 11, 2011.

⁶⁸ The Republican Party Platform, adopted by the Republican National Convention, July 15, 1980, Detroit, Michigan, available at <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25844#axzz1SBtYa4JV>.

⁶⁹ Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974–2008* (New York: Harper, 2008), 151.

⁷⁰ Lenczowski, interview.

⁷¹ Alexander Haig, for example, signaled a new tone in U.S.-Soviet relations by cutting off long-serving Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin's access to his private elevator in the Department of State building. Dobrynin saw this as a bit of political theater, but the larger message got through loud and clear.

Dobrynin notes that Reagan's first press conference and the Politburo reaction amounted to what was an unprecedented catastrophe in personal relations between the two countries at the highest levels. See Alexander M. Haig and Clare B. Luce, *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 101; and Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (1962–1986) (New York: Times Books, 1995), 486, 607.

⁷² Duncan L. Clarke, "Arms control and foreign policy under Reagan," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November 1981, 12–19.

⁷³ Gates, 202–208. The request actually came from Ron Spires, who headed the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) at the time, albeit with Haig's approval. INR had produced an early 1981 assessment of Soviet support for terrorism that was widely rejected by senior Reagan administration leaders, and Spires thought a community-wide intelligence estimate would defuse the situation. See Goodman, 175–176; and interviewee 22, October 3, 2011.

⁷⁴ Douglas F. Garthoff, "Chapter III: Analyzing Soviet Politics and Foreign Policy," in *Watching the Bear: Essays on CIA's analysis of the Soviet Union*, ed. Gerald K. Haines and Robert E. Legget, footnote 42 (Washington, DC: CIA, 2003). Casey's reorganization also created an Office of Soviet Analysis, which lasted until the fall of the Soviet Union, but the Office of Global Issues had a branch that looked at Soviet covert action, or "active measures."

⁷⁵ Lenczowski, interview. Casey was even more concerned about reforming the CIA's Directorate of Operations. Gates, 209ff.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 203–206.

⁷⁷ Interviewee 18.

⁷⁸ Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981–1987* (New York: Pocket Books, 1988), 73.

⁷⁹ "Charles Wick, 90, Information Agency Head, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2008, available at <www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/us/24wick.html>.

⁸⁰ Walter Raymond, *Dictionary of Politics: Selected American and Foreign Political and Legal Terms* (Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publication Company, 1978), 417.

⁸¹ "Memo Outlining 'Project Truth' Campaign," *The Washington Post*, November 10, 1981, A11.

⁸² Alvin A. Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation: American Propaganda, Soviet Lies, and the Winning of the Cold War: An Insider's Account* (New York: Arcade Publication, 1995), 11.

⁸³ Alan L. Heil, *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 201.

⁸⁴ National Security Decision Directive 45, "United States International Broadcasting," July 15, 1982, available at <www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-045.htm>; "Modernizing in the 1980s," Voice of America Official History Web site, available at <www.insidevoa.com/about/history/a-13-34-2007-modernizing-in-the-1980s-111602659.html>.

⁸⁵ Member of the Active Measures Working Group, interview by authors, February 8, 2011.

⁸⁶ Kenneth deGraffenreid, interview by authors, April 20, 2011.

⁸⁷ Jajko, interview.

⁸⁸ Executive Order 12333, "United States Intelligence Activities," December 4, 1981, 6, available at <www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12333.html>.

⁸⁹ DeGraffenreid, interview. National Security Council (NSC) senior staff had a tough time pushing issues through interagency committees. Even if they convinced National Security Advisor

Clark to take up the issue with President Reagan, the President would not “discipline” the heads of the departments and agencies holding up progress.

⁹⁰ Mark Riebling, *Wedge: The Secret War between the FBI and CIA* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 349.

⁹¹ Jajko, interview.

⁹² The effort was also pushed by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where Romerstein was a staff member; interviewee 18.

⁹³ National Security Advisor Clark had to make a request to FBI Director Webster to get Major assigned to the NSC. Doing so implied that the FBI was part of the Intelligence Community, which was a sensitive issue. DeGraffenreid, interview.

⁹⁴ Riebling, 351.

⁹⁵ Jim Bruce, senior political scientist for RAND and former CIA analyst, telephone interview by authors, November 1, 2011. Bruce organized the conference and wrote up its results.

⁹⁶ Interviewee 18.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Jack F. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 256.

⁹⁹ David Major, interview by authors, May 5, 2011. State opposed counterintelligence reforms that could result in more aggressive action against Soviet agents because of the potential embarrassment and disruptions in bilateral relations it could cause. See also Riebling, 364.

¹⁰⁰ Lenczowski believes that the event helped sensitize intelligence officials to possible Soviet deception, whereas others we interviewed were more impressed by the resolute insistence from such professionals that no such deception was possible. Lenczowski, interview.

¹⁰¹ Interviewee 18.

¹⁰² DIA had already established an office responsible for denial and deception issues. Interviewee 18; Bruce, interview.

¹⁰³ For many, the joke was that the name was apt because America was in denial about deception. Interviewee 18.

¹⁰⁴ James A. Schear, “Arms Control Treaty Compliance: Buildup to a Breakdown?” *International Security* 10, no. 2 (1985), 141–182. See also Zell Stanley, *An Annotated Bibliography of the Open Literature on Deception* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, December 1985), prepared for the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

¹⁰⁵ Some observers note that the Intelligence Community is more resistant to political agendas for good reason. New Presidential administrations make political appointments throughout the upper levels of the government, but historically only a handful of the CIA’s top leaders are political appointees because Presidents are anxious to avoid charges of “politicizing” intelligence.

¹⁰⁶ “Functioning of Diplomatic Organs,” in *Public Diplomacy: USA Versus USSR*, ed. Richard F. Staar, 132 (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986).

¹⁰⁷ Jajko, interview. The FBI also stoutly refused to participate in the interagency working group supporting the Department of Defense (DOD) *Soviet Military Power* effort.

¹⁰⁸ To capture the working group’s entire history and output, we built a detailed chronology of the group’s activities, products, and effects based on meeting minutes, personal accounts, and primary

and secondary literature. To date, only two sets of minutes for the working group have been declassified (and two for the classified NSC working group). The authors requested expedited declassification of all the working group's minutes in March 2011 and are waiting for a final response from State.

¹⁰⁹ The group's first product on Soviet active measures, a special report, was delivered in October 1981. Kux notes in an oral history of his diplomatic career that the group "gradually gathered information for about a year" before putting it together in an annual report. It must have been less than a year, since he acknowledges that the working group "was new and started in the Reagan administration," but it suggests the group formed in the early to late spring of 1981. Dennis Kux, oral history in *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, January 13, 1995, available at <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/>>.

¹¹⁰ Senior leaders had already tried to stimulate CIA interest in a report on Soviet active measures and run into stiff bureaucratic resistance. Some who participated in that study told the authors that the CIA wanted State to lead the effort so that it would be more credible to the public and U.S. allies. CIA classified activities in this area were already receiving some unfavorable attention from Senators, and another outlet for countering Soviet active measures was needed. In his oral history, Kux introduces the origins of the working group with observations that might be interpreted to support this assertion. He notes that "In the past, to the extent that the U.S. countered 'disinformation,' it was handled by the CIA and lacked 'credibility.'" It also is true that others on the working group suspected that early CIA representatives to INR who worked on the group were assigned the task of directing the group's efforts. Ibid.; interviewee 18; interviewee 19; and David Hertzberg, interview by authors, March 2, 2011.

¹¹¹ In an oral history of his diplomatic career, Palmer notes his background included "iconoclasts," and that his student activities made it difficult for him to get a security clearance. He also relates how he offered his resignation to Secretary of State Haig after a public diplomacy gambit backfired. See Palmer's October 30, 1997, oral history, available at <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/>>.

¹¹² Alex Alexiev, *The Soviet Campaign Against INF: Strategy, Tactics, Means* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1985), available at <www.rand.org/pubs/notes/N2280>.

¹¹³ Peter Dailey, phone interview by authors, April 8, 2011.

¹¹⁴ Peck was identified in the Turkish press as a CIA agent, which "he wasn't." He was "a victim of pro-Communist disinformation." The Turkish foreign minister, who at the time was a "left-winger" "in a Left wing government" took the allegations of CIA affiliation seriously and asked that Peck be withdrawn. The United States refused, but Peck did leave the country early. See Kux, oral history.

¹¹⁵ Kux, interview. In his oral history, Kux notes that he thinks Palmer and Peck persuaded Secretary Haig to agree to the creation of the working group.

¹¹⁶ Kux, oral history.

¹¹⁷ Dennis Kux, email message to authors, September 17, 2011.

¹¹⁸ Kux, interview.

¹¹⁹ The authors contacted both Mark Palmer and Morton Abramowitz. Neither Palmer, reputedly inclined favorably toward the working group, nor Abramowitz, reportedly inclined unfavorably toward the group, could recall much if anything about the group.

¹²⁰ Kux, oral history.

¹²¹ Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group.”

¹²² Lenczowski, interview.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Woodward, 171.

¹²⁵ Lenczowski, interview.

¹²⁶ This sum included the \$1.3 billion to modernize Voice of America, but also included, among other things, \$2 million to cover the damage to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty offices after they were bombed by terrorist Carlos the Jackal on February 21, 1981. Lenczowski was able to get Wick, Haig, and Frank Shakespeare (the chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting) to sign off on the package. Lenczowski, interview; Cissie Dore Hill, “Voices of Hope: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty,” *Hoover Digest*, no. 4 (October 30, 2001), available at <www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/6270>; and Richard H. Cummings, *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950–1989* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2009).

¹²⁷ Lenczowski, interview.

¹²⁸ Kux, interview; Kux, oral history.

¹²⁹ Lenczowski, interview.

¹³⁰ Kux, email message.

¹³¹ Kux met with Levchenko, whom he found quite helpful. For example, Soviet defectors helped the group understand how a forgery could be identified as Soviet in origin: “When we would say that you can’t tell for sure that it was done by the Soviets unless you can get the fellow who prepared it, we would be asked: ‘Why do you think that it came from the Soviets?’ Then, through a process of analysis we would show how we came to this conclusion. We had some help from Soviet defectors who had worked in this area and were able to put together a fairly credible picture of what was going on.” Kux, email message; Kux, oral history.

¹³² Kux, interview; Kux recalls that Bill Young, an INR analyst (and no relation to the Florida Congressman who took such an interest in Soviet active measures), was particularly helpful in this regard.

¹³³ These five are known to the authors and some who were interviewed. However, at the time, those who publicly testified used code names and some who are alive today are still reluctant to be identified. Sheldon Rapoport, phone interview with authors, March 15, 2011; interviewee 21, email message to authors, September 18, 2011. Robert Gates explains that the CIA’s few experts in Soviet active measures were in the Directorate of Operations and that the CIA did not analyze Soviet active measures. After Casey created the Office of Global Issues in the Directorate of Intelligence, this situation reversed, and by 1985, it was John Kringen, chief of the Subversion Analysis Branch, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center, Office of Global Issues, Directorate of Intelligence, who testified to the Senate on active measures. Gates, 202.

¹³⁴ *Soviet Active Measures: Forgery Disinformation, Political Operations*, Special Report 88 (Washington, DC: Department of State, October 1981).

¹³⁵ Bernard Gwertzman, “U.S. Accuses Soviets of ‘Disinformation,’” *The New York Times*, October 10, 1981, A3.

¹³⁶ Charles Mohr, “State Dept. Cites Soviet Forgeries,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 1981, A11.

¹³⁷ Hertzberg worked in INR’s Office for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He wrote almost all of the working group’s Foreign Affairs Notes, although sometimes with contributions from other group members.

¹³⁸ Hertzberg, interview. This was something the CIA was just learning to do. The Directorate of Operations watched for this kind of activity but did not turn it over to CIA analysts because they considered it operational intelligence. The situation was not rectified until about the time Hertzberg was preparing his reports. See Gates, 200–208.

¹³⁹ Jajko, interview.

¹⁴⁰ *Expulsion of Soviet Representatives from Foreign Countries*, 1970–81, Foreign Affairs Note (Washington, DC: Department of State, February 1982).

¹⁴¹ Gerald Seib, “Caught Red Handed More Soviet Envoys Are Ejected as Spies,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 14, 1982; “Behind the Latest Surge in Soviet Spying,” *U.S. News and World Report*, November 11, 1982.

¹⁴² Hertzberg, interview; Wallace Spaulding, phone interview with authors, April 20, 2011; Lucas Fischer, phone interview with authors, April 19, 2011; Jim Milburn, interview with authors, May 12, 2011.

¹⁴³ Kux, email message.

¹⁴⁴ Romerstein, “Disinformation,” 67.

¹⁴⁵ Judith Miller, “House Supports Reagan on Arms, Adopting His Idea of Atom Freeze,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 1982, A1.

¹⁴⁶ “President Says Foes Of U.S. Have Duped Arms Freeze Group,” *The New York Times*, October 5, 1982, A22.

¹⁴⁷ Joanna Omang, “Magazine Articles Cited in KGB-Freeze Link,” *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1982.

¹⁴⁸ Miller.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group: An Eyewitness Account of U.S. Counterpropaganda Strategy,” in *The Public Diplomacy Reader*, ed. J.M. Waller (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2007), 351.

¹⁵¹ Jajko, interview. Initially, Jajko and his small “Special Advisory Staff” handled strategic psychological operations, but it quickly outgrew his capacity to manage it full time. In January 1986, they succeeded in getting Colonel Alfred H. Paddock, Jr. (previously of the 4th Psychological Operations Group), to manage the topic when General Stilwell created an office for that purpose and had Paddock assigned director for psychological operations. Paddock, email message to authors, August 24, 2011. Similarly, Jajko’s staff began handling DOD involvement in public diplomacy, but in 1983 created an office run by an Air Force colonel and—at its height—six staffers. Later, a CIA clandestine service officer who was retiring was brought in to lead the effort, but “he didn’t fit in too well with DoD,” and after the Reagan administration left office, the group disappeared. Interviewee 10, email message to authors, August 8, 2011.

¹⁵² Stilwell was principal deputy under secretary of Defense for policy. He also had a good personal relationship with Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger. Paddock, email message, August 24, 2011.

¹⁵³ DOD sent representatives from OSD as well as from the DIA. From DIA, Dr. Winifred Joshua, who worked Soviet affairs, provided information to the group and sent several of her best people to group meetings, including John Dziak and David Curtin. Jajko, interview.

¹⁵⁴ Lenczowski, interview.

¹⁵⁵ Kux, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Lenczowski, interview.

¹⁵⁸ One trip attendee had the impression that because the briefing teams were interagency, they received more support and attention from Embassy staffs. Interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Kux, interview.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Peter Almond, "Recent Ejection of Soviet Spies hint Agents strive for 'big score,'" *The Washington Times*, May 20, 1983. A1.

¹⁶³ Kux, interview.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.; Kux oral history.

¹⁶⁵ Both Hertzberg and Kux recall that the initial products, and the Foreign Affairs Notes in particular, used primarily unclassified sources. Later, when the group was required to produce longer public reports under Bailey, adjudicating declassification of sources became more contentious. David Hertzberg, email message to the authors, September 29, 2011; Kux, email message.

¹⁶⁶ "Russian Spies: How Many More?" *The Economist*, April 30, 1982; Almond; Daniel Southerland, "Behind Soviet's Low-key response to Diplomats' Expulsion," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 1983.

¹⁶⁷ Almond.

¹⁶⁸ Kux, interview.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Perhaps the grand jury standard was a misnomer since it implies only "probable cause to believe the crime has been committed" rather than the more conservative "beyond reasonable doubt" standard that the group actually followed.

¹⁷⁰ All the points and quotations in this paragraph come from an email clarification from Kux.

¹⁷¹ Kux, oral history.

¹⁷² *Soviet Active Measures*, Special Report No. 110 (Washington, DC: Department of State, September 1983).

¹⁷³ The group was "not sufficiently sure of the Soviet hand since the conversation did not really make Reagan look bad, only Mrs. Thatcher," and that seemed inconsistent with Soviet methods. Kux, email message; Kux, interview.

¹⁷⁴ "Confessions of a Hoax," *The Washington Post*, January 25, 1984.

¹⁷⁵ Kux, oral history.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.; Kux, email message.

¹⁷⁷ Robert D. McFadden, "Koch tells of FBI Visit in Weinberger Case," *The New York Times*, December 16, 1983, A1.

¹⁷⁸ Michael Goodwin, "Mayor Releases Webster letters on F.B.I.'s Visit," *The New York Times*, December 30, 1983, B3.

¹⁷⁹ Kux, interview; Kux, email message; Kux, oral history.

¹⁸⁰ Jajko, interview.

¹⁸¹ Numerous sources made this point. From the beginning, INR's Soviet desk sent a relatively junior Foreign Service Officer to keep tabs on the working group for this reason.

¹⁸² Interviewee 22, interview with authors, September 14, 2011. Some on the group were considered Cold War ideologues. Interviewee 22, October 3, 2011.

¹⁸³ Eagleburger was assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs from May 14, 1981, through January 26, 1982. In February 1982, he was appointed under secretary of State for political affairs.

¹⁸⁴ Lenczowski recalls that interagency groups he attended, including the Active Measures Working Group, could be influenced to be more activist over time: "Initially, I would say things and the people sitting around the table would look down and not debate them or just change the subject." Over time, however, the group would begin to ask the same sort of questions and eventually would follow up with action. Lenczowski, interview.

¹⁸⁵ Rapoport, phone interview.

¹⁸⁶ Lenczowski, interview.

¹⁸⁷ Handwritten note in authors' files courtesy of David Hertzberg; Hertzberg, interview.

¹⁸⁸ Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), "Soviet Delegate Comments on World Peace Assembly," USSR and International Affairs, World and Regional Issues (Washington, DC: FBIS, June 29, 1983).

¹⁸⁹ *The World Peace Council's "Peace Assemblies,"* Foreign Affairs Note (Washington, DC: Department of State, May 1983).

¹⁹⁰ FBIS.

¹⁹¹ Yuri Zhukov, a senior political commentator for *Pravda*, commented on the Foreign Affairs Note, which at the time was taken as an indication that the group's work had attracted the attention of the Soviet political leadership. David Hertzberg, email message to the authors, October 24, 2011.

¹⁹² *Soviet Active Measures*, 24 min. (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1984), available at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8IuVg3N6OA>. The "water on a rock" metaphor was used a lot by the group and group members.

¹⁹³ Kux, oral history.

¹⁹⁴ For example, a deputy assistant secretary of INR who succeeded Kux closed his address on Soviet active measures to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in May 1984 by noting that it was important to view active measures as the Soviets do, with "a long-term view. They are not seeking immediate, short-term gains or necessarily a big impact from any one operation. Rather, they regard active measures like pawns in a chess game, able to damage the opponent at the margin. . . . [T]he cumulative impact makes their considerable investment worthwhile." *Soviet Active Measures May 30, 1984*, Current Policy no. 595 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1985).

¹⁹⁵ For example, in a November 18, 1985, memorandum to Thomas Thorne, Bob Baraz cites *Parade Magazine* coverage of the Foreign Affairs Note on Soviet expulsions as evidence that "print media continue to find our publication a useful reference and value its factual, non-polemical style." Similarly, several years later in a Department of State letter drafted by Kathleen Bailey but released by State's assistant secretary for legislative affairs, the Department defends a working group report to Congressman Lee Hamilton by noting other Congressmen approved of the report's "non-polemical nature" and "the thoroughness of the research." The letter concluded by arguing that it was "important that Soviet disinformation and active measures be exposed in a truthful, non-polemical fashion. Only by doing

so can we expect to motivate the Soviets to discontinue such activities.” Department of State Assistant Secretary of Legislative Affairs J. Edward Fox to the Honorable Lee H. Hamilton, chairman, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, House of Representatives. The date is obscured (but sometime in the fall 1987 since it references a report from September 1987). In the authors’ files courtesy of Hertzberg; memorandum from the Office of Soviet and East European Analysis, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Robert Baraz to INR Thorne, November 18, 1985, “Subject: More Publicity for our Foreign Affairs Notes.” In authors’ files courtesy of Hertzberg.

¹⁹⁶ Thus, the article reached both European and U.S. audiences, including State personnel. *Department of State Bulletin* #2077, August 1983, 45–49; Lawrence Eagleburger, “Unacceptable Intervention: Soviet Active Measures,” *NATO Review* 31, no. 1 (April 1983), 6–11. Evan Dawley, Office of the Historian, Department of State, email message to the authors, July 28, 2011.

¹⁹⁷ Lenczowski, interview; Eagleburger, “Unacceptable Intervention.”

¹⁹⁸ One early member believed the CIA sent Andy Sheren to INR specifically to get control of the Active Measures Working Group, and USIA would later assume de facto control of the group when Congress assigned USIA to do a public report on active measures.

¹⁹⁹ He became State’s deputy director of management operations, and worked a classified project with substantial interagency dimensions. Kux, oral history.

²⁰⁰ Interviewee 21, phone interview with authors, September 7, 2011.

²⁰¹ Rapoport, phone interview.

²⁰² Ibid. Knepper gave an address on active measures to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on May 30, 1984. Current Policy No. 595.

²⁰³ Lucian Heichler, interview by authors, February 9, 2011; interviewee 13, April 19, 2011. Heichler intersected with Kux during their earlier tours at the U.S. Embassy in Turkey.

²⁰⁴ Andrew Sheren, interview with authors, April 19, 2011.

²⁰⁵ David Major, interview with authors, May 5, 2011.

²⁰⁶ Milburn, interview. As it turned out, FBI informant Major Sergei Motorin, who worked in the Soviet Embassy in Washington, was betrayed by the Soviets’ mole in the CIA, Aldrich Ames, and then executed by the KGB.

²⁰⁷ Rapoport, the group’s executive secretary, drafted the cable and Heichler approved it, but it was coordinated with several other offices in INR and the rest of State as well as USIA. Unclassified Department of State outgoing telegram, 091124Z “Feb 84; From SECSTATE WASHDC to All Diplomatic and Consular Posts, Subject: Soviet Active Measures: Foreign Affairs Note Series, Expulsions of Soviets Worldwide, 1983.”

²⁰⁸ State Department incoming telegram, September 1985.

²⁰⁹ Members of the Nuclear Freeze movement had criticized President Reagan for raising a red herring when he claimed that the Soviets were manipulating the freeze movement leaders. But Hertzberg’s boss in INR, Bob Baraz, happily wrote a note on the incoming cable from United States Information Service (USIS) Germany reporting the positive public reactions: “David, Another piece of fan mail for you! Sheldon [Rapoport] was kind enough to bring it by, and I took the opportunity to point out that when it is done right one does not get questions on why the State Department [is] chasing red herrings. Bob.” Cable provided to authors, courtesy of Hertzberg.

²¹⁰ Foreign Affairs Notes were described as “an informal research study for background information.” The special reports carried a higher profile and typically the imprimatur of State’s Bureau of Public Affairs. The group would later have at least one or two “Current Policy” statements as well, which reprinted testimony from an interim Active Measures Working Group leader and director of the CIA. For a complete list of known working group products, see appendix A.

²¹¹ *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985.

²¹² The directive was issued in January 1983 but was not revealed until April 18, 1983.

²¹³ Confidential Memorandum for Members Soviet Political Action Working Group, “From: Walter Raymond, Jr. Subject: Soviet Political Action Working Group: December 15, 1984 Meeting. National Security Council. December 30, 1984.”

²¹⁴ Peter Dailey, interview with authors, April 8, 2011.

²¹⁵ After Palmer helped set up the group, Steve Mann from his EUR/SOV office monitored the group and even occasionally travelled with it. Kux, email message.

²¹⁶ Confidential Memorandum for Members Soviet Political Action Working Group, “From: Walter Raymond, Jr. Subject: Soviet Political Action Working Group: December 15, 1984 Meeting. National Security Council. December 30, 1984.”

²¹⁷ Confidential Memorandum for Members the Soviet Political Action Working Group, “From: Walter Raymond, Jr. Subject: Soviet Political Action Working Group: January 13, 1984 Meeting. National Security Council. January 26, 1984.”

²¹⁸ Jajko, interview. The interviewee recalls that he saw all covert actions from 1980 until 1994, and there was never a case where covert actions conflicted with the Active Measures Working Group’s activities.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Rapoport, phone interview.

²²¹ DeGraffenreid recalls, for example, that while he found Abramowitz “a thoughtful guy and friendly,” he had “knock-down, drag-out fights with him” over policy issues. DeGraffenreid, interview; John M. Goshko and Lou Cannon, “State Intelligence Chief Replaced,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1984, A9.

²²² John M. Goshko, “Abramowitz Nomination is a Test for Shultz,” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1983, A13.

²²³ Lucian Heichler’s Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training interview, available at <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/about.html>>.

²²⁴ John Wiant was one such interim leader; interviewee 13.

²²⁵ Group members speculate that many in State considered Sulc too confrontational for this sensitive role. Indeed, Sulc’s book, *Active Measures, Quiet War and Two socialist Revolutions* (Boise, ID: Nathan Hale Institute for Intelligence and Military Affairs, 1985), begins with a section called “World War Three is Now.” Romerstein also addresses subjects in his books that State considered controversial at the time, such as Soviet support for international terrorism and *wet affairs*, the Soviet term for assassination.

²²⁶ Bailey, phone interview.

²²⁷ Sulc’s biographic information comes from his *Law Enforcement Counterintelligence* (Kansas City: Varro Press, 1996), 229, available at <www.scribd.com/doc/60320378/Law-Enforcement-

Counterintelligence>; and from the Department of State phonebook for January and October of 1985. The phonebook shows Sulc as the deputy assistant secretary for inter-departmental affairs. He is not listed in available 1986 editions, so evidently his tenure was short. State Office of the Historian, email message, August 23, 2011; Rapoport, phone interview. Rapoport spoke with Sulc on occasion about the working group and knew he was interested in the topic, but he did not attend meetings.

²²⁸ Sulc had a 7-year period on the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs. In 1983, he was also the executive director of the House Republican Study Committee, where it seems likely that he would have known an up and coming Republican such as Gingrich (who entered the house in 1979). This biographic information comes from the introduction to William E. Dannemeyer's submission of Lawrence Sulc's article in *Defense & Diplomacy* entitled "Hugging the Bear" to the *Congressional Record* on June 22, 1989, available at <www.fas.org/irp/congress/1989_cr/h890622-kgb.htm>.

²²⁹ "The World Really Is Dangerous," 131st Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 131 (Thursday, September 26, 1985), H 7877.

²³⁰ "The Lessons of Grenada," 131st Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 131 (Thursday, September 12, 1985), H 7460. Bailey also recalls that Gingrich was knowledgeable about active measures and took a strong interest in politics at State.

²³¹ The amendment would have required the President to establish a commission to determine the advisability of establishing a permanent office of "Soviet and communist disinformation and press manipulation" in State to provide information to the public on the issue.

²³² The language was in (Section 1247) of H.R. 2086—a bill to extend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954; Rapoport, phone interview.

²³³ Burnett, who identifies himself as far more liberal than the Reagan administration, nonetheless notes that he enjoyed working in that administration because, contrary to popular opinion, internally it encouraged open debate on all issues. In this regard, he notes that it mattered little that the reporting requirement for the working group originated with Gingrich, a conservative Republican. The group would have an open debate about appropriate contents for the report in any case. Burnett, phone interview.

²³⁴ In contrast, another ostensibly interagency group working public diplomacy under the auspices of State (which included some members attending the Active Members Working Group) ended up getting its wrist slapped in the aftermath of Iran-Contra investigations. A comptroller general report found that the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean headed by Otto Reich engaged in "prohibited, covert propaganda activities" that were "beyond the range of acceptable agency public information activities," and thus "violated a restriction on the use of appropriated funds for publicity or propaganda purposes not authorized by the Congress." Comptroller General of the United States to the Honorable Jack Brooke, chairman, Committee on Government Operations, September 10, 1987.

²³⁵ Rapoport notes that the group kept functioning throughout his tenure as executive secretary, putting out agendas and meeting minutes. Rapoport, phone interview. Bailey recalls that Hertzberg told her about the group of experts, and much later, some of what occurred under Kux, but she does not recall being briefed about the group and its official activities. Kathleen Bailey, email message, August 21, 2011.

²³⁶ An exception was Hertzberg, who from the beginning of her tenure in INR worked directly for Bailey in an adjacent office. He found her smart and dynamic and respected her.

²³⁷ Bailey joined the Reagan administration in 1983 as deputy director of the Office of Research in USIA. She was not perceived by the group as an active measures expert, but her research was relevant, giving her insights on public diplomacy problems, including Soviet efforts to defame the United States. The USIA Office of Research ran “Soviet Propaganda Alerts,” as part of Project Truth, which were sent to USIS posts around the world to provide background information on Soviet propaganda, the rationale it used, and how it misrepresented the situation. As one interviewee who came from a social milieu dominated by New York Jewish intellectuals noted, many (but not all) group members had his background, and whether they were conservative or liberal, it contributed to group cohesion. Bailey, however, did not fit this mold; Rapoport, phone interview.

²³⁸ Both State and CIA later published copies of the conference report; see, for example, *Contemporary Soviet Propaganda and Disinformation: A Conference Report*, Airlie, VA, 25–27 June, 1985 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987).

²³⁹ Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group,” 201–202.

²⁴⁰ Her doctorate came with specialization on Middle East and South Asian affairs.

²⁴¹ Her knowledge of the Intelligence Community came as a result of her 7 years at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where she led an organization conducting intelligence analyses of nuclear weapons proliferation.

²⁴² She was assigned oversight of INR’s Office of Long-Assessments, with duties as INR’s liaison with the staffs of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and House Permanent Committee on Intelligence, and responsibility for assisting Richard Clarke on several tasks, including being backup editor of the daily briefing on intelligence to the Secretary. The account of Bailey’s first meeting with Abramowitz is from an email from Bailey, August 21, 2011.

²⁴³ Kux does not recall declassification being such a contentious issue in the early years when the group relied more on unclassified analysis and materials. Kux, email message; Rapoport, phone interview.

²⁴⁴ *Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-U.S. Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns* (Washington, DC: Department of State August, 1986).

²⁴⁵ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁴⁶ Bill Gertz, “US beings new offensive on Soviet Disinformation,” *The Washington Times*, October 6, 1986.

²⁴⁷ Later, Congressman Lee Hamilton (chairman, House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East) would also express his concern about the timing and costs of the report to State. A personal note on the department’s reply to Hamilton from Don Sheehan indicates that Romerstein found out Hamilton’s inquiry had been stimulated by “a staffer.” Fox-Hamilton letter.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Gertz.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ FBIS, “Pomarev Denounces New Misinformation Bureau,” USSR International Affairs, United States and Canada (Washington, DC: FBIS, October 1986).

²⁵⁴ “US Counters Soviet Acts of Disinformation,” *The Washington Post*, October 8, 1986.

²⁵⁵ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁵⁶ Interviewee 3, interview with authors, March 2, 2011.

²⁵⁷ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁵⁸ Interviewee 21, phone interview; interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011.

²⁵⁹ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁶⁰ Interviewee 10.

²⁶¹ For a complete list of the products, see appendix.

²⁶² Staar.

²⁶³ “*Disinformation, the Media, and Foreign Policy*”: *Proceedings of the Airlie House Conference*, May 4, 1987 (Washington, DC: Department of State, October 1987).

²⁶⁴ The forensic analysis of these forgeries can be found in the “Recent Anti-American Forgeries” section of the report *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda*, 1986–1987 (Washington, DC: Department of State, August, 1987), 29–32.

²⁶⁵ USIA, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, 24.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁶⁷ Todd Leventhal as quoted in Snyder, 181.

²⁶⁸ *Soviet Influence Activities*. Interestingly, the FBI produced an internal domestically focused report in June of 1987.

²⁶⁹ See discussion on this incident in “Observations” section of this report.

²⁷⁰ The Soviets later attempted to revive the AIDS rumor despite official disavowals. The Soviet paper that ran the revival story ironically stated that it could publish the story because Soviet press had the right to “report different views.”

²⁷¹ Woodward, 172.

²⁷² These variables have been used to good effect in two previous analyses by the Organizational Performance Team at the Institute for National Strategic Studies (one on special operations forces and another on Joint Interagency Task Force–South). With one exception, these variables and their performance ranges are explained in Orton and Lamb. The exception is that the range of supporting subvariables for organizational support has been modified so that it begins by considering the working group’s relationships with other elements of the bureaucracy in terms of their support or the lack thereof.

²⁷³ In 2010, Romerstein suffered a debilitating stroke that sadly impaired his communication abilities. He was not available for an interview as a result.

²⁷⁴ John R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1993), 49.

²⁷⁵ Milburn, interview.

²⁷⁶ Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group,” 201.

²⁷⁷ Interviewee 21, phone interview.

²⁷⁸ Milburn, interview.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ There is, for example, the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean, which ostensibly was run by State but actually reported directly to Oliver North at NSC.

²⁸¹ DeGraffenreid, interview.

²⁸² Bailey, phone interview.

²⁸³ Active Measures Working Group member who prefers anonymity, interview with authors, February 8, 2011; Don Sheehan, interview with authors, March 1, 2011.

²⁸⁴ Interviewee 21, phone interview; interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011.

²⁸⁵ Sheehan, interview; Major, interview; Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

²⁸⁶ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁸⁷ Bradley L. Kirkman and Benson Rosen, "Antecedents and Consequences of Team Empowerment," *The Academy of Management Journal* 42, no. 1 (1999), 58–74.

²⁸⁸ Bailey, email message.

²⁸⁹ Heichler recalls INR was happy to give the group complete freedom and he was not required to get higher approval for the group's products. Heichler, interview.

²⁹⁰ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Hertzberg, interview.

²⁹⁴ Bailey, phone interview.

²⁹⁵ Milburn, interview. Jajko recalls that "Most representatives in the Group had to get clearance for each action or policy decision, particularly [State], CIA, and FBI. Not so OSD. I had a free rein from [the Secretary of Defense] and [Under Secretary of Defense for Policy] without checking so long as it comported in my view with US general policy. This made for fast reaction and execution by DoD." Walter Jajko, email message to the authors, August 22, 2011.

²⁹⁶ Kux, interview.

²⁹⁷ Interviewee 21, phone interview.

²⁹⁸ Active Working Group member, interview.

²⁹⁹ Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁰⁰ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² D.E. Hyatt and T.M. Ruddy, "An Examination of the Relationship between Work Group Characteristics and Performance: Once More into the Breach," *Personnel Psychology*, no. 50 (1997), 553–585.

³⁰³ "Why Some Teams Succeed (and So Many Don't)," in *Teams That Click*, ed. Loren Gary et al., 44 (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2004).

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Jajko, interview.

³⁰⁶ Lenczowski, interview.

³⁰⁷ Many sources besides Kux made this observation. Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Snyder, 16–17.

³¹⁰ Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011, October 3, 2011. The interviewee made the analogy

between the bureaucracy's reaction to the working group and the body's white blood cells rushing to protect it from foreign bodies that might cause an infection.

³¹¹ Kux, interview.

³¹² Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011.

³¹³ Major, interview.

³¹⁴ Milburn, interview.

³¹⁵ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

³¹⁶ Jajko, interview; Kux, email message.

³¹⁷ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

³¹⁸ In relating this point about encouraging USIA posts, Romerstein notes some willingly provided helpful evidence of Soviet disinformation but many were not inclined to: "It was clear from our experience with the Active Measures Working Group that bureaucrats needed high level encouragement." See Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group."

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Fischer, phone interview.

³²¹ Lenczowski, interview.

³²² Sheehan, interview. As Sheehan notes, the reverse side of this was that if the group made a misstep, important people such as assistant secretaries would notice.

³²³ Rapoport, phone interview.

³²⁴ Burnett, interview.

³²⁵ In this regard, one source underscores the point that Shultz had never seen the working group's report until Gorbachev tossed it on the table. Moreover, he notes that the story at the working level was that Shultz actually came back from the meeting irritated that the working group's report had been a source of friction and made clear that he did not want to see this happen again. Managers and analysts at the working level interpreted this to mean no more reports. Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011.

³²⁶ Burnett, interview.

³²⁷ See Christopher J. Lamb and Evan Munsing, *Secret Weapon: High-value Target Teams as an Organizational Innovation*, INSS Strategic Perspectives No. 4 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2011); and Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force-South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*, INSS Strategic Perspectives No. 5 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2011).

³²⁸ Bailey, phone interview.

³²⁹ Rapoport, phone interview; Bailey, email message.

³³⁰ Hertzberg, interview.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Fischer, phone interview.

³³³ Bailey, email message.

³³⁴ Rapoport, phone interview.

³³⁵ Prasad Balkundi and David A. Harrison, "Ties, Leaders, and Time in Teams: Strong Inference about Network Structure's Effects on Team Viability and Performance," *Academy of Management Journal* 49, no. 1 (2006), 49–68.

³³⁶ Interviewee 18. Some of the Consortium's products were virtual "roadmaps" for senior members of the Reagan administration. DeGraffenreid, interview.

³³⁷ Richard H. Shultz, phone interview by authors, July 29, 2011.

³³⁸ Major, interview.

³³⁹ Milburn, interview.

³⁴⁰ Shultz, interview.

³⁴¹ Sheehan, interview.

³⁴² Bailey, phone interview; interviewee 12, April 19, 2011.

³⁴³ Burnett, interview.

³⁴⁴ Hertzberg, interview.

³⁴⁵ R.A. Guzzo et al., *Team Effectiveness and Decision Making in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 204–261.

³⁴⁶ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

³⁴⁷ Sheren, interview.

³⁴⁸ Active Measures Working Group member, interview; Heichler also makes a point of the criticality of information sharing in the group.

³⁴⁹ Burnett, phone interview.

³⁵⁰ Milburn, interview.

³⁵¹ Jajko, interview. Others in the U.S. Government, however, believed that it was appropriate to undermine Soviet legitimacy, noting that, after all, the Bolsheviks and later the Communist Party of the Soviet Union never won a single election. Jajko, email message.

³⁵² Active Measures Working Group member, interview; Rapoport agrees that there was mostly agreement over what went into the reports, although at the working level questions of emphasis and accuracy of sourcing remained. Similarly, Bailey notes that there were few differences over content, although the amount of emphasis material received was sometimes disputed. Rapoport, phone interview; Bailey, phone interview.

³⁵³ Working group member recall that typically decisions were made on the basis of consensus, with a strong working group leader such as Kux or Bailey having the final say in the event that consensus was not possible. Interviewee 21, phone interview.

³⁵⁴ Jajko, interview.

³⁵⁵ L.H. Pelled, K.M. Eisenhardt, and K.R. Xin, "Exploring the Black Box: An Analysis of Work Group Diversity, Conflict, and Performance," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, no. 44 (1999), 2, 23.

³⁵⁶ Milburn, interview.

³⁵⁷ Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁵⁸ Burnett, phone interview.

³⁵⁹ Bailey, phone interview. Sheren, in addition to playing the role of working group diplomat, helped Bailey keep the group well organized. Interviewee 21, phone interview.

³⁶⁰ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁶¹ Milburn, interview.

³⁶² Bailey, phone interview.

³⁶³ Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁶⁴ For example, the group's first report omitted specifics to placate the concerns of regional desks in State. Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁶⁵ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Rapoport, phone interview. Bailey also recalls that she spent significant amounts of time briefing regional desks and making a case for their supporting the group's work. Bailey, email message.

³⁶⁸ Glenn M. Parker, *Cross-Functional Teams: Working with Allies, Enemies, and Other Strangers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 10.

³⁶⁹ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁷⁰ Heichler, interview.

³⁷¹ Interviewee 12.

³⁷² Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁷³ The capable members of the group generally ignored those who could not contribute. Interviewee 21, phone interview.

³⁷⁴ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁷⁵ Bailey, email message.

³⁷⁶ Burnett, phone interview.

³⁷⁷ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.; Sheehan, interview.

³⁷⁹ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁸⁰ Fischer, interview.

³⁸¹ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁸² L. Argote, D. Gruenfeld, and C. Naquin, "Group learning in organizations," in *Groups at work: Advances in theory and research*, ed. M.E. Turner (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1999); see also Mary Zellmer-Bruhn and Cristina Gibson, "Multinational Organization Context: Implications for Team Learning and Performance," *Academy of Management Journal* 49, no. 3 (2006), 501–518.

³⁸³ Orton and Lamb.

³⁸⁴ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

³⁸⁵ Hertzberg, interview.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Rapoport, phone interview. Kux agrees, noting, "at first we were all a little hesitant and groping our way—the bad experience in the first press conference was a case in point, but we learned and became more adept." Kux, email message.

³⁸⁸ Hertzberg, interview.

³⁸⁹ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁹⁰ Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁹¹ Kux, interview.

³⁹² Rapoport, phone interview.

³⁹³ Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group."

³⁹⁴ Without access to all the meeting minutes, a complete record of attendance is not possible. Our best estimate of the key members is included in the chart on Key Active Measures Working Group Membership.

³⁹⁵ Lenczowski is a case in point. He was more active in the group before moving to the NSC. Once there, he represented the NSC staff on occasion and other times Walt Raymond did. Eventually, his attendance fell off. Bailey notes that when Lenczowski stopped coming, she called and asked him to come and participate, and he came to one or two meetings, but then quit coming. When she called to encourage his continued participation he said he was just stretched too thin. Similarly, sometimes Paddock attended meetings as the OSD director for psychological operations and sometimes he sent his deputy, Air Force Colonel “Jake” Jacobowitz. Paddock, email message to authors, May 10, 2011; Bailey, email message.

³⁹⁶ Bailey, phone interview.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. From January 1986 on, Paddock attended from OSD in his capacity as director for psychological operations where his duties “ranged far beyond just strategic psychological operations.” His deputy, Air Force Colonel Jake Jacobowitz, sometimes attended meetings of the working group in his stead. He replaced Paddock when he retired in October 1988. Paddock, email message, August 24, 2011.

³⁹⁸ Fischer, phone interview; the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency even got into the counter-disinformation effort directly, publishing an exposé of Soviet propaganda against the strategic defense initiative. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), *The Soviet Propaganda Campaign against the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative* (Washington, DC: ACDA Office of Public Affairs, 1986).

³⁹⁹ Jajko, interview.

⁴⁰⁰ Spaulding, phone interview; Milburn, interview.

⁴⁰¹ Milburn, interview.

⁴⁰² Interviewee 18.

⁴⁰³ Sheehan, interview.

⁴⁰⁴ Interviewee 21, phone interview; Interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011. The interviewee recalls that although it was classified, the publication “proved a great vehicle for publicizing active measures and analyzing trends. The information could also be shared with most members of the working group and ‘sanitized’ articles published at lower classification. The fact that Active Measures was the responsibility of the Office of Global Issues (rather than the Soviet) Office of the Intelligence Directorate made it easier to get information out.”

⁴⁰⁵ This includes interviewee 21, who concurred with other group members on “the extreme value provided by Herb Romerstein.” The interviewee attended the Tachibana meetings, noting they were “a great opportunity to pick Herb’s brain.” Interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011.

⁴⁰⁶ Jajko, interview.

⁴⁰⁷ Burnett, phone interview; interviewee 21, phone interview.

⁴⁰⁸ Sheren, interview.

⁴⁰⁹ Bailey, email message; also interviewee 12.

⁴¹⁰ Interviewee 12.

⁴¹¹ Ibid. All other member interviews record Romerstein as the most expert on the topic of active measures. However, Bailey recalls his advantage in comparative expertise lessened as the group worked together over her tenure. Paddock, email message, August 24, 2011; Bailey, email message.

⁴¹² Jajko, interview.

⁴¹³ Sheren, interview. Although Romerstein was a fount of knowledge, he typically did not generate written products for the group, which helps explain the group's lower productivity when Kux and Bailey were not there to lead it. Leventhal produced the USIA submissions to the working group or, in some cases, Bailey would interview Romerstein and then write up the results. Bailey, email.

⁴¹⁴ Sheren, interview.

⁴¹⁵ These characterizations come from interviewee 12, who had enormous respect for Romerstein, but are completely consistent with other member depictions.

⁴¹⁶ Burnett, phone interview; Sheren, interview.

⁴¹⁷ Sheren, interview. Kux remembers Romerstein as a "rational hardliner" (unlike other political appointees supporting counter disinformation efforts who were "loose cannons") and someone a person could cooperate with, particularly if they were inclined toward action. Once Romerstein complimented Kux by telling him that "unlike some [Foreign Service Offices]," he "liked to get things done and not just talk about them." Kux, email message.

⁴¹⁸ Burnett, phone interview; Heichler, interview; Bailey, email message.

⁴¹⁹ Burnett, phone interview.

⁴²⁰ Individuals often group themselves and others into social categories and perceive those in their own social category as more trustworthy and capable, and outsiders as less trustworthy and capable. See H. Tajfel and J.C. Turner, "Critical Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. S. Worchel and W. G. Austin, 7–24 (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1986).

⁴²¹ Burnett, phone interview.

⁴²² Interviewee 12.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Her first executive secretary thought that some team members would have respected her more initially if she had "grayer hair" or had "been a man." On the other hand, Linnea Poulsen and Winnie Joshua, both women and experts, were readily accepted by the working group. Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴²⁵ As previously noted, Bailey had an extensive resume and was considered a credible authority by Abramowitz.

⁴²⁶ Heichler, for example, recalls there were "no tensions at all" in the group during his tenure as chair. Heichler, interview.

⁴²⁷ Bailey was young, perceived as political, and not taken as seriously at first, even though that changed over time. Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴²⁸ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.; Burnett, phone interview.

⁴³⁰ Shultz, phone interview.

⁴³¹ Sheren, interview.

⁴³² Bailey, phone interview.

⁴³³ Another source closely aligned with Romerstein still ranks Bailey's leadership of the group as subpar in contrast with all other sources' assessment.

⁴³⁴ Sheehan, interview.

⁴³⁵ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴³⁶ Rapoport, phone interview; Fischer, phone interview; interviewee 22, email message to authors, October 18, 2011.

⁴³⁷ One member noted that leading the working group was “not something you’d aspire to do at the Department of State, so you could imagine a lack of interest, but Kux never acted that way.” Milburn, interview.

⁴³⁸ The fact that Kux’s immediate superior in INR at the time, Hugh Montgomery, was a CIA employee could only have helped with this well-deserved recognition.

⁴³⁹ He succeeded there and went on to become an Ambassador, but was told by his superior he would have been fired if he had failed. Kux, oral history

⁴⁴⁰ Sheehan, interview.

⁴⁴¹ See the depiction of team leadership as traditional, coaching, and shared in Orton and Lamb.

⁴⁴² Sheren, interview.

⁴⁴³ Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁴⁴ Sheren, interview; Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁴⁵ Active Measures Working Group member, interview; Sheehan was an “FSO-3” and Heichler was an “FSO-1.” Sheehan, interview.

⁴⁴⁶ Fischer, phone interview. As an ACDA official, Fischer was used to interagency groups and used to seeing NSC figures in the lead, but he notes there was no doubt that Bailey was in charge of the working group; S.J. Zaccaro, A.L. Rittman, and M.A. Marks, “Team Leadership,” *Leadership Quarterly*, no. 12 (2001), 454.

⁴⁴⁷ Rapoport, phone interview. Bailey agrees that she tried to give the working group the majority of her time, but it varied according to her other duties. Bailey, email message. Another indication of the time Bailey spent on the working group is provided in State response to an inquiry from Congress about the costs of the working group’s public report. State noted the “primary editor of the report” (that is, Bailey) “estimates that she spent approximately 200 hours on the project, at a total cost of \$4,848.” Fox-Hamilton letter.

⁴⁴⁸ Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Jajko, interview. Milburn made the same point.

⁴⁵² Fischer, phone interview; Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁵³ Burnett, phone interview.

⁴⁵⁴ Interviewee 21’s observation is typical; the interviewee noted that Kux was well respected but that later when Bailey took over she had to “earn her respect.” Interviewee 21, phone interview.

⁴⁵⁵ Initially some members wondered whether Bailey would be an effective advocate for the group’s products and fight the bureaucracy when necessary, but she won their confidence in this regard. Burnett, phone interview.

⁴⁵⁶ Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. The group continued meeting in the INR conference room after Kux. Heichler, interview.

⁴⁵⁸ Bailey, email.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Sheren, interview. Some members speculated that her management style reflected her limited government experience, and even the fact that she was married to a senior DOD official who worked in an environment where a “take charge” approach was the norm.

⁴⁶¹ Bailey, email message.

⁴⁶² Fischer, phone interview.

⁴⁶³ Rapoport, phone interview.

⁴⁶⁴ Sheren, interview.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Bailey, email.

⁴⁶⁷ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Interview 12, April 19, 2011.

⁴⁷⁰ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴⁷¹ Sheehan, interview.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Major was one of only a handful of NSC staff that survived the Iran-Contra purge. In his view, after the purge, the bureaucracy pushed back and Presidential priorities were more easily stymied. Major, interview.

⁴⁷⁴ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴⁷⁵ Burnett, phone interview.

⁴⁷⁶ Bailey, phone interview.

⁴⁷⁷ Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011. The source, a career intelligence officer working for State, wishes to remain anonymous.

⁴⁷⁸ For example, in an interview with Meet the Press, on October 26, 1987, Shultz explained to Chris Wallace that he replied firmly to Gorbachev because “he needs to see that we will stand up for our interests, and to speak straight.” Shultz, 998.

⁴⁷⁹ Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011.

⁴⁸⁰ Interviewee 3, interview with authors, March 12, 2011. The interviewee noted that he was aware and not bothered by how “in touch Romerstein was with the political side of things.” He considered it a fact of life given the working group’s subject matter focus. Interviewee 12.

⁴⁸¹ USIA, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era Of Glasnost*.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Snyder, 181.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 182.

⁴⁸⁵ Sheren, interview.

⁴⁸⁶ Major sent Hanssen to the working group, and pulled him off of the group in April 1990. Hanssen expressed great interest in Soviet active measures. Major, interview. Hanssen was not remembered by working group members favorably. Beyond the fact that he turned out to be a spy, one member recalls he was insufferable, “a horse’s ass,” and that his meetings were “absurd.” Interviewee 12.

⁴⁸⁷ Sheren, interview.

⁴⁸⁸ *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda*, 1987–1988.

⁴⁸⁹ Interviewee 21 recalls, for example, that her team at CIA working active measures was disbanded sometime in early 1990 after it became clear the dissolution of the Soviet Union was under way. She was reassigned to work high technology issues. Interviewee 21, phone interview; and interviewee 21, email message, September 2, 2011.

⁴⁹⁰ *Soviet Influence Activities*.

⁴⁹¹ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

⁴⁹² USIA, *Soviet Active measures in the "Post-Cold War" Era: 1988-1991* (Washington, DC: USIA, June 1992), available at <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/index.htm#Contents>.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Interviewee 12.

⁴⁹⁵ The latest edition is Wallace Spaulding, "International Communism and Related Activities: 2010," Washington, DC: The Maldon Institute, September 9, 2011; Spaulding, phone interview.

⁴⁹⁶ Spaulding, phone interview.

⁴⁹⁷ Kux recalls that he knew Romerstein well but that he was not a regular attendee at his meetings. Kux, email message.

⁴⁹⁸ For example, see *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 106–108.

⁴⁹⁹ See Gates' and Knepper's testimony, and Eagleburger's article, for example.

⁵⁰⁰ Detailed accounts of U.S.-Soviet relations recount many instances where official lies undermined trust. See Matlock, 67, 70, 258.

⁵⁰¹ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 665, 679 especially, but also 619, 645, 662, 665, 669, 715. Instead, Reagan focuses on Soviet behavior, including cheating on arms control agreements and Soviet efforts to stir up trouble in less developed countries. One Soviet source indicates, however, that Reagan consciously decided to lower the level of rhetorical animosity. Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (1962–1986) (New York: Times Books, Random House, 1995), 563.

⁵⁰² Matlock, 65, 101, 153, 176, 253–254, 259–260, 272–274.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 67ff.

⁵⁰⁴ The KGB arrested Nicholas Daniloff in retaliation for the American arrest of a Soviet spy. Reagan, 666–669.

⁵⁰⁵ Gorbachev, 202, 403, 406, 412–415.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 420.

⁵⁰⁷ Matlock, 254. It could also be argued that Soviet forgeries that portrayed the most senior U.S. officials as intent on nuclear first strikes suggested a lack of seriousness about arms control.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 253.

⁵⁰⁹ Knepper, during a brief period of leadership for the working group, linked increased KGB forgeries and emphasis on disinformation to Soviet disappointment with détente, noting "the timing of the shift in the mid-1970s suggests a connection with Soviet disappointment with the fruits of détente." *Soviet Active Measures, May 30, 1984*, Current Policy No. 595 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1985).

⁵¹⁰ Matlock.

⁵¹¹ Eagleburger.

⁵¹² Snyder, 181.

⁵¹³ Matlock, 152.

⁵¹⁴ Deputy CIA Director Robert Gates noted in congressional testimony that many West European governments did not respond more aggressively to Soviet active measures in part for this reason. *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 24.

⁵¹⁵ Eagleburger.

⁵¹⁶ Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group," 200.

⁵¹⁷ Shultz, 998.

⁵¹⁸ Dobrynin, 601; Current Policy No. 761; FBI, "Soviet Active Measures in the United States, 1986–1987," 2–3.

⁵¹⁹ Dobrynin, 619, 628.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 623–624, 626–627.

⁵²¹ Although one source indicates Shultz returned to State and ordered an end to such reports.

⁵²² Shultz, 998.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁴ Gorbachev states in his memoirs that KGB activities were a "closed" area for Politburo review. Gorbachev, 204.

⁵²⁵ Wick briefed Reagan on the conversation, observing that "Just as arms negotiations are leading to weapon's elimination perhaps information talks will do away with Soviet disinformation." Snyder, 180.

⁵²⁶ See "Soviet 'Disinformation' Claim Noted, Denied," *Moscow TASS in English*, September 30, 1987 (Washington, DC: FBIS, October 1, 1987), 19; "Kornilov Cites Disinformation Campaign," *Moscow TASS in English*, October 5, 1987 (Washington, DC: FBIS, October 6, 1987), 18; "Ozerov Counters 'Disinformation' Attacks," *Moscow Sovetskaya Rossiya in Russian*, October 30 1987 (Washington, DC: FBIS, November 3, 1987), 10.

⁵²⁷ See, for example, the TASS report on the Shultz-Gorbachev meeting: "Discussions with Gorbachev," *Moscow TASS in English*, October 23, 1987 (Washington, DC: FBIS, October 26, 1987), 3; "Ivanov Denies VOA Misinformation Claims," *Moscow Izvestiya in Russian*, November 17, 1987 (Washington, DC: FBIS, November 19, 1987), 13.

⁵²⁸ Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group," 203.

⁵²⁹ For example, in early November 1987, *Izvestia*, an official newspaper of the Soviet government, published an article by two respected Soviet scientists that challenged the previous Soviet line and claimed they had protested the appearance of Soviet articles that attributed AIDS to the United States.

⁵³⁰ Don Oberdorfer, "State Department Hails Moscow for 'Disavowal' on AIDS," *The Washington Post*, November 3, 1987.

⁵³¹ There were even weak attempts to revive the AIDS rumor after it was officially disavowed. The Soviet paper that ran the revival story ironically said it could publish the story because the Soviet press had the right to "report different views." USIA, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, 11.

⁵³² Dobrynin found it hard to explain the changes in Soviet policy under Gorbachev because they confused him as well. Dobrynin, 628.

⁵³³ Some observers do not believe Gorbachev did much to curb Soviet use of disinformation.

Lenczowski, interview; John Lenczowski, "Military Glasnost and Strategic Deception," *International Freedom Review* (1990).

⁵³⁴ Thomas Thorne made this point in his testimony to Congress. See *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 45.

⁵³⁵ Interviewee 22, September 14, 2011. For example, Casey called Soviet active measures a critical weapon in "the psychological war waged against the free world by the Soviet Union and its allies," and believed "the most successful Soviet disinformation campaign" in the early 1980s was the Soviet effort to block the neutron bomb, which, "if deployed, would have rendered useless the overwhelming Soviet and bloc armored force superiority in any West European theater conflict." Current Policy No. 761, 1, 5.

⁵³⁶ The entire give-and-take between Gates (and John Kringen of CIA) and Senator Biden is illustrative of the debate about the impact of Soviet disinformation. *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 17–25.

⁵³⁷ The FBI, State, and USIA all trumpet the working group in their testimony to Congress as the proper strategic and organizational response to Soviet disinformation, as did the CIA in a public speech by Casey. *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 30, 45, 54, 89; Current Policy No. 761.

⁵³⁸ Current Policy No. 595.

⁵³⁹ Interviewee 12. Deputy CIA Director Gates testified to Congress that the Agency's best estimate in 1982 was that the total Soviet annual expenditure for active measures was in the range of \$3 to 4 billion. This figure also made it into the press, and is recalled by members of the group we interviewed. *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 4; Gertz.

⁵⁴⁰ Active Measures Working Group member, interview.

⁵⁴¹ Heichler, interview.

⁵⁴² Rapoport, phone interview.

⁵⁴³ The contents of Foreign Affairs Notes were mentioned frequently in the U.S. press and commented upon favorably by INR officials in internal memoranda. Authors' files, courtesy of Hertzberg.

⁵⁴⁴ "U.S. Counters Soviet Acts of Disinformation," *The Washington Post*, October 8, 1986.

⁵⁴⁵ Heichler related this example in his testimony to Congress as the chairman of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Soviet Active Measures. He also provided another example of Soviet disinformation that was far more successful, and which he suspects was done by East German intelligence for the Soviets. Heichler was fluent in German and able to assess the forged document for its near perfect German "governmentalese." *Soviet Active Measures*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 95–96, 106–108.

⁵⁴⁶ For example, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* examined the working group's report and allegation of a Soviet disinformation campaign and concluded "the American accusation seems more than justified." "Soviet Disinformation on the AIDS Example: A US State Department Report," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, November 6, 1987.

⁵⁴⁷ Fox-Hamilton letter.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. The 1987 press run of 5,000 copies and mailings cost \$12,000.

⁵⁴⁹ Paddock notes that the loss of important NSC staff in the aftermath of the Iran-Contra affair also seriously complicated programs his office was trying to carry out during his tenure as director for psychological operations in OSD. Paddock, email message, August 24, 2011.

⁵⁵⁰ See Orton and Lamb.

⁵⁵¹ The group supported public diplomacy initiatives such as increased funding for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and had about 45 representatives. Palmer, oral history.

⁵⁵² Interviewee 22, October 3, 2011. The interviewee led one such group.

⁵⁵³ Marissa Martino Golden, "Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect: Bureaucratic Responses to Presidential Control During the Reagan Administration," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 2, no.1 (1992), 30.

⁵⁵⁴ For example, Bailey's motives were considered suspect by some career officials in State who thought she was intent on using the Active Measure Working Group to further her own political career. Accordingly, they did not support her efforts.

⁵⁵⁵ DeGraffenreid, interview.

⁵⁵⁶ Lenczowski believed that without Palmer's support, he would have been isolated and ineffective in State's bureaucracy. Lenczowski, interview.

⁵⁵⁷ USIA, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*.

⁵⁵⁸ DeGraffenreid, interview.

⁵⁵⁹ At a critical juncture in U.S.-Soviet relations, Shultz ordered his Soviet affairs staff to stop communicating with Jack Matlock, the special assistant to the President and senior director of European and Soviet affairs, because Matlock's attempts to forge interagency consensus irritated him. He did this despite the fact that Matlock was a Foreign Service Officer; in fact, the first one assigned to the Reagan NSC. See Matlock.

⁵⁶⁰ The group's productivity declined in the following years 2 years. Admittedly, this happened for multiple reasons, including the departure of Bailey, willingness of the Soviet Union to tone down its disinformation, and departure of the experienced working group members (for example, Hertzberg) and the CIA's and FBI's talented group representatives, who were replaced by more junior and less experienced personnel. In addition to these factors, it is possible that other organizations did not trust USIA to lead the group. The next public report was produced almost exclusively by the USIA representative.

⁵⁶¹ For an extended discussion on this point, see Christopher J. Lamb and Edward Marks, *Chief of Mission Authority as a Model for National Security Integration*, INSS Strategic Perspectives, No. 2 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2010).

⁵⁶² See PNSR, 234ff.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ See Lawrence Eagleburger, Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training interview, available at <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/about.html>>.

⁵⁶⁵ DOD defines *strategic communication* as the means used to "engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power" Joint Publication 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 8, 2010, as amended through May 15, 2011).

⁵⁶⁶ Robert Jervis' classic work on this topic is *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

⁵⁶⁷ Benjamin B. Fischer, *A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare* (Washington, DC: CIA, 1997).

⁵⁶⁸ Cited in Loch K Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 151.

⁵⁶⁹ Matlock, 257.

⁵⁷⁰ Mike Mullen, "Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics," *Joint Force Quarterly* 55 (4th Quarter 2009).

⁵⁷¹ Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 10th ed. (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India, 1990), 524–525.

⁵⁷² Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 324.

⁵⁷³ In 2003, Islamic leaders in northern Nigeria spread rumors that polio vaccines sterilized Muslim girls. Leaders halted vaccinations, allowing the virus to spread. The World Health Organization stated that the virus eventually infected 20 countries. By the start of last year, Nigeria was home to half of the world's 1,600 polio cases. See "Eradicating Polio," April 23, 2010, available at <www.economist.com/blogs/lexington/2010/04/eradicating_polio>.

About the Authors

Mr. Fletcher R. Schoen was a research assistant in and later a subject matter expert under contract with the Center for Strategic Research, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), at the National Defense University. From 2010 to 2012, Mr. Schoen worked as a valued member of the organizational performance team in CSR conducting research on a wide range of projects requiring analysis of military and national security organizations. Mr. Schoen is a graduate of Colby College. He is currently serving in the U.S. Army.

Dr. Christopher J. Lamb is a Distinguished Research Fellow in the Center for Strategic Research, INSS, at the National Defense University. He conducts research on national security strategy, policy, and organizational reform, and on defense strategy, requirements, plans, and programs. In 2008, Dr. Lamb was assigned to lead the Project for National Security Reform study of the national security system, which led to the 2008 report, *Forging a New Shield*. Prior to joining INSS in 2004, Dr. Lamb served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Resources and Plans where he had oversight of war plans, requirements, acquisition, and resource allocation matters for the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy). Previously, he served as Deputy Director for Military Development on the State Department's Interagency Task Force for Military Stabilization in the Balkans; Director of Policy Planning in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; and from 1985 to 1992 a Foreign Service Officer in Haiti and Ivory Coast. He received his doctorate in International Relations from Georgetown University in 1986. Dr. Lamb has received the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Senior Executive Service, the Superior Honor award from the Department of State, and Meritorious Civilian Service awards from the Department of Defense.

Center for Strategic Research Senior Fellows

COL MICHAEL H. BELDING, USMC

Senior Military Fellow

MS. M. ELAINE BUNN

Distinguished Research Fellow

MR. JOHN A. COPE

Senior Research Fellow

DR. ROZLYN C. ENGEL

Distinguished Research Fellow

DR. T.X. HAMMES

Distinguished Research Fellow

SANDRA L. HODGKINSON

Visiting Distinguished Research Fellow

MR. TETSUYA ITO

Visiting Research Fellow

DR. CHRISTOPHER J. LAMB

Distinguished Research Fellow

DR. ANDRE LE SAGE

Senior Research Fellow

DR. THOMAS F. LYNCH III

Distinguished Research Fellow

MR. LEO G. MICHEL

Distinguished Research Fellow

DR. JOHN W. PARKER

Visiting Research Fellow

DR. JAMES J. PRZYSTUP

Senior Research Fellow

LTC JOEL D. RAYBURN, USA

Senior Military Fellow

CAPT MARK E. REDDEN, USN

Senior Military Fellow

DR. NICHOLAS ROSTOW

Senior Director

DR. PHILLIP C. SAUNDERS

Distinguished Research Fellow

DR. JUDITH S. YAPHE

Distinguished Research Fellow

DR. CHRISTOPHER YUNG

Senior Research Fellow

For a complete list of INSS researchers and staff, please visit www.ndu.edu/inss/index.cfm.

