

Counter intelligence

Ideas for Active Measures can originate from anywhere within the KGB and indeed from within the Politburo itself. Active Measures, whether involving only a single operation or a number of carefully co-ordinated operations in several countries, usually are executed by regular KGB officers stationed abroad under diplomatic cover.

The extent to which the Russians and their friends, including the Cubans, have stepped-up their espionage and disinformation activities throughout the world is a cause for concern. Perhaps more important, however, is the much more aggressive manner in which these activities are being carried out. At times the aggressive nature of some recent operations appears almost to border on the irrational.

It has been argued that this new aggressiveness means that these activities may no longer be fully within the control of the Soviet government. Given the nature of the Soviet government, however, and the manner in which the apparatus works it is highly unlikely, if not impossible, that important initiatives in espionage or disinformation could be taken without the explicit knowledge and approval of the government. If the KGB and others were not fully within the control of the Politburo there would be cause for concern. But there is even greater reason to be concerned about the implications of the more likely possibility that the Soviet government, in fact, approves the more aggressive stance being displayed by the KGB and the GRU. That possibility raises some very serious questions about the management of future relations with the Soviet Union and about Soviet Grand Strategy.

It is quite possible that the Soviet Union under Andropov deliberately embarked upon a campaign of increased and more aggressive intelligence activity throughout the world. After all Andropov, several years ago, is reputed to have said "the area of historic confrontation between socialism and capitalism is the whole world — all spheres of social life; economic, ideology, politics, and the KGB operates in an area where there are not, nor can there be, truces and breathing spaces."

The Soviet leadership may have concluded that by adopting such a stance they had little to lose, and possibly, much to gain. They may have calculated that the worst result of increasing Soviet espionage and disinformation activity would be a temporary worsening of relations with those countries in which their subversive activities are discovered. From experience they would know that such wors-

ened relations would rarely do permanent damage to Soviet interests.

Increased Soviet activity

The extent of increased Soviet espionage activity can be illustrated from available statistics of Soviet officials who have been expelled from different countries in the last few years. Such statistics do not give a complete picture. Obviously a significant proportion of espionage and disinformation activity remains undetected. In addition, the offended country may, for its own reasons, choose to keep secret some activities which are discovered.

From the beginning of 1978 until August 1983, 316 Soviet officials have been expelled from 43 countries. Of the 316 a good proportion were expelled in the first eight months of 1983. From January to August, 1983 there were 111 Soviet officials expelled in 16 countries, and from August 1983 until the present 110 have been expelled in 14 different countries.

Countries are understandably cautious about revealing, even to their closest allies, more than is absolutely necessary about their successes and failures in dealing with these activities, the precise targets involved or the damage sustained. There is a necessary exchange of information about espionage activities among the security and intelligence agencies of a great number of countries. However, except between the closest of allies, these exchanges tend to deal mainly with tradecraft, identification of agents and the disposition of particular cases. Rarely do they involve detailed information about targets — especially when the information might be politically damaging to a government. All this, of course is known to the other side who, with customary shrewdness have no doubt reckoned the odds against more effective international arrangements being put in place.

In a very free society like Canada's perhaps there is little which can be done to completely prevent others from exploiting the vulnerabilities which are at the same time our greatest strength — the inherent rights to liberty and freedom, the ability to travel freely, to associate freely, to protest and to dissent. Exploitation can, however be limited and, on occasion stopped through a specially staffed, well-trained and properly controlled security agency with sufficient investigative and other powers. It is to be hoped the recently established Security Intelligence Service will be such an agency. □