

Lessons From Operation “Denver,” the KGB’s Massive AIDS Disinformation Campaign | The MIT Press Reader

By Mark Kramer

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In September 1985, the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) informed other Warsaw Pact foreign intelligence agencies that it had launched a new, major disinformation campaign. “We are carrying out a complex of [active] measures in connection with the appearance in recent years of a new dangerous disease in the USA known as AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).” The KGB explained that “the goal of the measures is to create a favorable opinion for us abroad — namely, that this disease is the result of secret experiments by the USA’s secret services and the Pentagon with new types of biological weapons that have spun out of control.” Most likely, the KGB had initiated the disinformation campaign as early as 1983, but the September 1985 document — obtained by Christopher Nehring from the former Bulgarian State Security archive — is the earliest conclusive evidence that has turned up so far. (The former KGB foreign intelligence archive has never been accessible to researchers.)

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