



Weekly Intelligence Notes

Member OpEd

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The Intelligence Community Under Attack - From Within

by Lewis Regenstein*

Normally, disputes within the intelligence community (IC) are handled privately, behind closed doors, and are usually conducted in a respectful manner. But now, the controversy over Havana Syndrome is spilling over into public view, characterized by an erosion of trust in top officials, bitter ad hominem attacks, vicious name calling and accusations of dereliction of duty -- and worse.

Here is some background and an update on major new developments, most of which have been covered in the Weekly Intelligence Notes but not by the national mainstream media, despite the implications for the leaders and agencies responsible for America's national security.



Author Lewis Regenstein

Significantly, coverage of these serious accusations in AFIO publications has produced no pushback or rebuttals from the IC or its defenders, or from the experienced and knowledgeable retired officials who constitute the readership of these publications, some of whom have been directly involved, often as victims, in this debate.

Seven Decades of Russian Attacks on Americans

For over 71 years, Russia has been attacking Americans with directed energy weapons, causing the debilitating and neurologically damaging illness known as Havana Syndrome (HS).

Now, some victims of HS have become very ill, contracting Parkinson's disease and other crippling ailments, and several have died recently or are dying, possibly from the damage done by exposure to microwave radiation.

This has prompted outrage from some respected retired and active intel officers, who have now begun to speak out and describe surprising acts of obstruction and willful ignorance on the part of leading intelligence officials, some of whom are accused of sabotaging efforts to investigate HS.

As amazing as it may seem, Russian operatives have gotten away with attacking American officials abroad for some 71 years, as has been described and conclusively documented for decades in classified government documents. (See, for example, my article "The Mysteries – and Realities – of Havana Syndrome," AFIO's The Intelligencer, Journal of U.S. Intelligence Studies, Winter-Spring, 2023.)

Both American and Russian officials have privately, and sometimes publicly, acknowledged Russia's use of harmful microwave radiation beamed at Americans.

Individual Attacks Begin in Cuba

The widespread targeting of specific individual Americans abroad seems to have begun in 2016 in Cuba, although at least two attacks against American officials apparently took place in 1996. In 2016, press reports began to appear then, revealing a "new" and "mysterious" neurological malady, source unknown, suddenly affecting some American officials in Cuba, and later elsewhere around the world.

Eventually, it became apparent that the appearance of HS was neither new, nor mysterious, nor of unknown origin, and it was destroying the health of diplomats, intelligence officers, military attaches and, collaterally, often striking members of their families who happened to be nearby, usually at home, at the time of the attacks.

Soon, it became obvious to those familiar with the evidence that HS was very probably the result of Russian weaponization of microwave transmitters. They were a refinement of microwave attacks that had been taking place since 1953 in Moscow, when the Russians began bombarding our embassy there with microwave radiation at levels known to their scientists to be harmful to human health. Even Vice President Nixon was targeted when he visited, a fact that was concealed from the public for decades.

These attacks in Moscow were well known, fully confirmed through the release of official papers from that era from the State Department, the Nixon Library and the Secret Service— and zealously hidden from public view by U.S. officials, even though the Russians privately admitted they were radiating the embassy and living quarters of our diplomats in order, they said, to counter U.S. surveillance equipment.

Three American ambassadors to Russia, whose offices were regularly radiated during their terms, died at early ages of cancer—Chip Bohlen at 69; Llewellyn Thompson at 67; and Walter Stoessel at 66.

The Russians have openly bragged about developing portable weapons to broaden the attacks. In April, 2012, then Russian Defense Minister Anatoli Serdyukov [announced, ominously, that Russia's ten year military procurement plan included weapons based on "directed energy" and "psychotronics"](#)—which would be intended to attack the central nervous system.

Denying the Obvious

As American victims began piling up and speaking out, the State Department and other agencies denied or minimized the seriousness of the situation, with federal consultants and task forces attributing the evidence and brain damage suffered by officials to mass hysteria, hypochondria, even to the chirping of crickets.

As of the end of 2022, at least 220 American officials, perhaps up to 1,500 or more, had complained of having been harmed or severely disabled just since 2016.

In December 2020, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine provided detailed evidence implicating weaponized microwaves as the cause of HS. The report, by a panel of 19 experts in medicine and related fields, commissioned by the State Department, concluded that the “most plausible mechanism” that caused the severe health effects during incidents beginning in 2016 was “directed, pulsed radiofrequency energy,” a category that includes microwaves.

On 31 March 2024, a joint yearlong, extensively documented report by CBS's "60 Minutes," The Insider and Der Spiegel, was broadcast and released, which "uncovered evidence suggesting that unexplained anomalous health incidents, also known as Havana Syndrome, may have their origin in the use of directed energy weapons wielded by members of Russian GRU Unit 29155. Members of the Kremlin's infamous military intelligence sabotage squad have been placed at the scene of suspected attacks on overseas U.S. government personnel and their family members."

It also named Russian operatives involved in the covert attacks, including Andrey Averyanov, the "founding commander" of the Unit and now a deputy director of the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency, with his son, Albert, actually carrying out the targeting of some of the victims.

Lt. Colonel Greg Edgreen, who headed the Defense Intelligence Agency unit investigating HS, insisted that intelligence reports from various agencies conclusively implicate the Russians as being the source of the incidents.

Some intel officials have tried to bring to public attention Russia's covert attacks by leaking to the media highly sensitive and detailed classified information, placing Russian operatives in the vicinity, even the same hotel, as their victims, based on cell phone data and other evidence from communications intercepts and signals intelligence.

Daniel Hoffman, a former CIA Station Chief in Moscow, on 8 Aug wrote in The Washington Times a tribute to former CIA officer Zoe Moulton, an HS victim who died on 25 April of cancer, citing some of the most incriminating data implicating Russia in the attacks and for the illness and possibly the deaths of some of his former colleagues.

On 5 September 2024, Bill Gertz in The Washington Times reported that Russia had a “high-powered microwave weapon that may have the ability to weaken, intimidate, or kill an enemy over time without leaving evidence”:

["Russia's](#) government since the 1990s has had the type of microwave weapons that are suspected in the covert attacks on U.S. intelligence officials and diplomats,” according to a National Security Agency document dated 16 October 2014 that revealed the microwave weapon in an unclassified statement. The statement is related to an incident involving two NSA counterintelligence officials working in [Russia](#) in 1996 who later suffered debilitating brain-related injuries after a suspected microwave attack.

The Greatest Intelligence Scandal

Leading the fight to get to the truth is experienced intel insider and former National Security Agency analyst and counterintelligence officer, John Schindler. In his newsletter Top Secret Umbra, in early September 2024, he described HS as "the greatest scandal in the history of American intelligence."

After interviewing over a dozen former and current intel officers “with direct knowledge” of the issue, he wrote that “The U.S. Intelligence Community is systematically suppressing discussion of how Russia and Cuba have attacked hundreds of Americans with a secret weapon...several friends and colleagues of mine have fallen victim experiencing ruined health and worse; hence, my pointed question about how many more American spies must die before our government does something here.”

A few days later, he wrote, “The Greatest Threat to American Spies is Their Own Leadership—Whistleblowers are trying to expose the awful truth about ‘Havana Syndrome,’ but the Biden-Harris administration won’t let them.”

He also accused top CIA officials of cancelling an operation to have an allied nation detain GRU operatives on their way to launch an attack and seize a backpack weapon.

Schindler wrote that “for many years, multiple hostile intelligence services have employed a Russian-designed and -built acoustic directed energy weapon against Americans to harm and cripple them. The culprits are Russia’s Federal Security Service or FSB (for attacks inside or near Russia), the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff or GRU (for attacks further afield) and Cuba’s Dirección de Inteligencia or DI, a close Kremlin spy partner since the 1960s (many of the attacks in the Western Hemisphere, including inside the U.S., are the DI’s handiwork).”

Schindler unequivocally put the blame on “The Biden-Harris administration, [which] in [the greatest scandal in the history of American intelligence](#), has assiduously hindered discussion of this secret Kremlin weapon and who’s using it to cripple and even kill Americans, including attacks inside the United States. Since 2021, the Intelligence Community has told lies, prevented the truth from reaching Congress and the public, and executed a bureaucratic conspiracy to stifle discussion of Havana Syndrome. Of course, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his ‘special services’ know exactly what they’ve done. And they know that we know.”

A recent CNN report revealed that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was suspending its investigation of AHI’s (anomalous health incidents, as HS is now being called) after it learned that “people had been coerced into to being part of the research.” Schindler wrote that “CIA willfully tainted the NIH studies by including people who were likely not suffering from AHI. CIA employees were asked leading questions, for instance: Have you ever suffered migraines? That’s about half of American adults. Langley succeeded in establishing a signal-to-noise ratio that ensured the ‘scientific’ findings that Biden’s IC needed from NIH.”

Brian Karem in Salon magazine reported on 15 September 2024 that “[t]he CIA has consistently lied to the American public about anomalous health incidents (AHI) for the last several years and may be guilty of obstruction of justice, according to documents recently released by the U.S. government.”

These documents included a whistleblower report that was filed last year with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence’s Inspector General which “directly contradicts the asserted conclusions that U.S. personnel, particularly within the IC, are not being attacked by a foreign power using some sort of directed energy. It asserts the existence of classified documents, which are specifically identified in the complaint, is being deliberately covered up, including being withheld from other investigating federal agencies.”

On 16 September 2024, HS victim Mark Linzi wrote an article in The Hill saying, “Congress: Please let me give you a classified briefing on Havana Syndrome...In spring 2018, while I was

-serving as a U.S. diplomat in Guangzhou, China, my wife, my two children and I were medevac'd and then diagnosed by leading American doctors with traumatic brain injuries. The cause? Pulsed microwave standoff attacks by Russian military intelligence operatives."

Has Russia Paused the Attacks ?

The good news is that maybe, just maybe, new attacks on Americans have paused or stopped, following CIA Director William Burns' at least three publicly reported meetings with Russian officials, warning his counterparts in Russian intelligence in November 2021 of "consequences"—that is, retaliation—if the attacks continued.

Burns' most recent known meeting was on 14 November 2022, with the head of Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), Sergey Naryshkin, in Ankara, Turkey, and there have been no publicly reported attacks since then, with one possible exception.

At the same time, top agency officials continue to deny that a foreign source is involved in causing HS, despite much new evidence. A January 2022 CIA study [determined](#) that, after an exhaustive study, it had "so far not found evidence of state actor involvement in any incident."

In March 2023, Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, reflecting the administration's position, continued to maintain that "it is very unlikely that a foreign adversary is responsible" for the attacks. In addition, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence observed, "[f]ive [IC] agencies judge that available intelligence consistently points against the involvement of U.S. adversaries in causing the reported incidents."

This willful ignorance betrays the many dedicated and valuable CIA staffers loyally serving our country, and especially those who are victims of HS. Moreover, our weakness on this and other issues has been provocative, helping erode our deterrence, encouraging Russian aggression, and helping destabilize today's world, from Eastern Europe, to Asia, to the Middle East.

Dr. Eugene Poteat, a brilliant scientist who was in charge of the CIA's worldwide network of monitoring stations, and was awarded its highest honor, the Medal of Merit, understood what was at stake here. Before he died in May 2022 at 92, he presciently warned that "[t]hese risks are too much to ask of these government patriots...the perpetrators [must be] exposed...and halted. Forever. If not, [these] weapons will find their way into the U.S. as a tool of terrorists, criminals, troublemakers, and psychopaths. Psychopaths other than Putin."

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