

Unveiling the truth: how the United States fought Soviet disinformation during the Cold War

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Worksheet

Exercise 1

The Cold War was not an ideological war.	F
The political discourse was used to influence people.	T
Disinformation was used for domestic and external purposes.	T
The Cold War was due to political, economic and ideological rivalry.	T
The Soviets did not blame the US for the AIDS epidemic.	F
The era of social media increases the incidences of disinformation.	T
Traditional media (newspapers) can compete with instant social media information.	F
Social media makes the spread of disinformation easier.	T
Trusted networks of information are safe from disinformation.	F
It is easy to differentiate between true and false information on the Internet.	F

Exercise 2

Possible answer:

During the 1980s, Soviet disinformation campaigns increased in number. It also targeted issues affecting the wider population – such as health issues – which led to increased panic and a sense of vulnerability among people. Specific examples refer to

Operation TARAKANY ('cockroaches'). The Soviets created a science-fiction-style story about genetically modified mosquitoes that carried viruses and infected water sources (Source C). Another disinformation campaign that created panic within the population was the AIDS virus that was allegedly an American made virus (Source D).

Exercise 3

Possible answer:

The Soviets' claim that the United States created biological weapons was intended to undermine American influence globally and within international organisations. It led to panic in the US population and increased distrust in government institutions.

Exercise 4

Possible answer:

Although the two presidents were initially reluctant to enter into a dialogue, in the second part of the 1980s, diplomatic negotiations led to arms-reduction agreements. It also stopped campaigns such as the disinformation relating to AIDS.