

January 1, 1953

Soviet Plan to Assassinate Tito

Citation:

"Soviet Plan to Assassinate Tito", January 1, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Dmitrii Volkogonov, Izvestiia (11 June 1993). Translated by Natasha Shur.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112973>

Summary:

NKVD plan to assassinate Josip Broz Tito by a Soviet covert agent, codenamed "Max." The plan envisions assassinating Tito during a private audience during Tito's forthcoming visit to London, or at a diplomatic reception in Belgrade. This document was not dated.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

The MGB USSR requests permission to prepare a terrorist act (terakt) against Tito, by the illegal agent 'Max'," Comrade I.R. Grigulevich, a Soviet citizen and member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1950 ([biographical] information attached)

1. "Max" was placed in Italy on a Costa Rican passport, where he was able to gain the confidence and enter the circles of South American diplomats as well as well-known Costa Rican political and trade figures visiting Italy.

Using these connections, "Max", on our orders, obtained an appointment as the special plenipotentiary of Costa Rica in Italy and Yugoslavia. In the course of his diplomatic duties, in the second half of 1952, he visited Yugoslavia twice. He was well received there, with official welcoming into circles close to Tito's clique; he was promised a personal audience with Tito.

"Max's" present position offers us opportunities to carry out active measures (aktivnye deistviia) against Tito.

In early February of this year, we summoned "Max" to Vienna for a secret meeting. While discussing options, "Max" was asked how he thought he could be most useful, considering his position. "Max" proposed some kind of active measure against Tito personally.

In relation to this proposal, there was a discussion with him [Max] about how he imagined all of this and as a result, the following options for a terrorist act against Tito were presented.

1. To order "Max" to arrange a private audience with Tito, during which a soundless mechanism concealed in his clothes would release a dose of pulmonary plague bacteria that would guarantee death to Tito and all present. "Max" himself would not be informed of the substance's nature, but with the goal of saving "Max's" life, he would be given an anti-plague serum in advance.

2. In connection with Tito's expected visit to London, to send "Max" there to use his official position and good personal relations with the Yugoslav ambassador in England, [Vladimir] Velebit, to obtain an invitation to the expected Yugoslav embassy reception in Tito's honor.

The terrorist act could be accomplished by shooting with a silent mechanism concealed as a personal item, while simultaneously releasing tear gas to create panic among the crowd, allowing "Max" to escape and cover up all traces.

3. To use one of the official receptions in Belgrade to which members of the diplomatic corps are invited. The terrorist act could be implemented in the same way as the second option, to be carried out by "Max" who as a diplomat, accredited by the Yugoslav government, would be invited to such a reception.

In addition, to assign "Max" to work out an option whereby one of the Costa Rican representatives will give Tito some jewelry in a box, which when opened would release an instantaneously-effective poisonous substance.

We asked Max to once again think the operation over and to make suggestions on how he could realize, in the most efficient way, actions against Tito. Means of contact were established and it was agreed that further instructions would follow.

It seems appropriate to use "Max" to implement a terrorist act against Tito. "Max's" personal qualities and intelligence experience make him suitable for such an assignment. We ask for your approval.

