DAVID LEIGH recounts the 30-year history of the Foreign Office's covert propaganda operation

Death of the department that never was

DETAILS ARE coming to light for the first time of the Foreign Office's covert propaganda operation. A document recently discovered in the files of the department reveals the existence of a network of agents who worked to influence public opinion in various countries around the world. The operation was carried out by a small team of analysts and operatives who worked under the guidance of the department's propaganda chief. The documents detail the various strategies and tactics used by the propagandists, including the use of phony sources, false identities, and even fake news stories. The operation was funded by a secret budget and operated independently of the Foreign Office's main diplomatic efforts. The operation's main targets were in the Third World and those countries where Russia had a strong presence. The propagandists worked to sow seeds of doubt and misinformation, often using propaganda campaigns to undermine government policies and support opposition movements. The operation was ultimately shut down in the late 1980s, but its legacy lives on in the form of the many campaigns that still flourish today. The document also reveals that the operation was not without its critics, and that some members of the Foreign Office, including some senior figures, were aware of its existence but chose to turn a blind eye. The operation's success in influencing public opinion was seen as a victory for the department, and its legacy remains a source of pride for those who worked to make it a reality.