

Bugged Brick from the U.S. Embassy Moscow, 1965

Loan from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State



Why did Soviet officials place a bugged brick in a wall of the U.S. Embassy? What information did they hope to hear? This is a reminder that protecting sensitive information is a critical part of a diplomat's work.

For centuries, espionage has relied on technology. In 1965, Security Engineering Officers found and removed this Soviet listening device, otherwise known as a bug, from inside a brick located behind a heater at the United States Embassy in Moscow. The bug is a witness to the fact that diplomats everywhere must always be on the alert to potential espionage.

The Cold War, the era of tension and competition between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and their allies, began after World War II in the mid-1940s and lasted until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Both superpowers were rivals in gaining and exercising their global influence. Espionage, as demonstrated by the bugged embassy brick, was one effective tactic used in attempts to outmaneuver and intimidate the enemy.



Map of Russia today



Ambassador Lodge points to site of bug concealed in a U.S. Seal that hung in the Ambassador's Office. Ironically, the tampered Seal was a gift of Soviet school children.

AP Photo