Historical Events of Significance: background for Dr. Strangelove

1950-1951: Conservative Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies tries to ban the Communist Party of Australia. Fails.

1954: Petrov Affair: Vladimir Petrov (Third Secretary and Consul at the Russian Embassy) and his wife seek political asylum in Australia. Petrov hands over papers detailing Soviet espionage in Australia. Some papers implicate members of ALP leader Evatt’s personal staff. Event leads to break-up or split in the Labor party, preventing it from attaining power until 1972 and the severing of diplomatic relations between Australia and the Soviet Union.

1956: USSR invades Hungary.
1957: USSR put first man-made satellite in space, Sputnik 1. Space race well and truly underway. US troops sent to Little Rock Arkansas to enforce integration between whites and blacks in schools.

1959: Fidel Castro becomes premier of Cuba. After a period of 4 years, diplomatic relations resume between Australia and the Soviet Union. Espionage resumes also.

1960: John F. Kennedy elected president of the USA. Laser developed. Contraceptive pill introduced. US U-2 reconnaissance plane shot down over the USSR. Cuba receive military aide from the USSR.


1963: JFK assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Martin Luther King Jnr. Delivers his “I have a dream” speech in Washington. Menzies wins landslide election on an election campaign largely based on militant anti-communism. Australia expels the Soviet ambassador after he was caught attempting to recruit a female ASIO agent. USSR retaliates and expels Australian ambassador from Moscow.

1965: Australia send full infantry battalion to Vietnam.