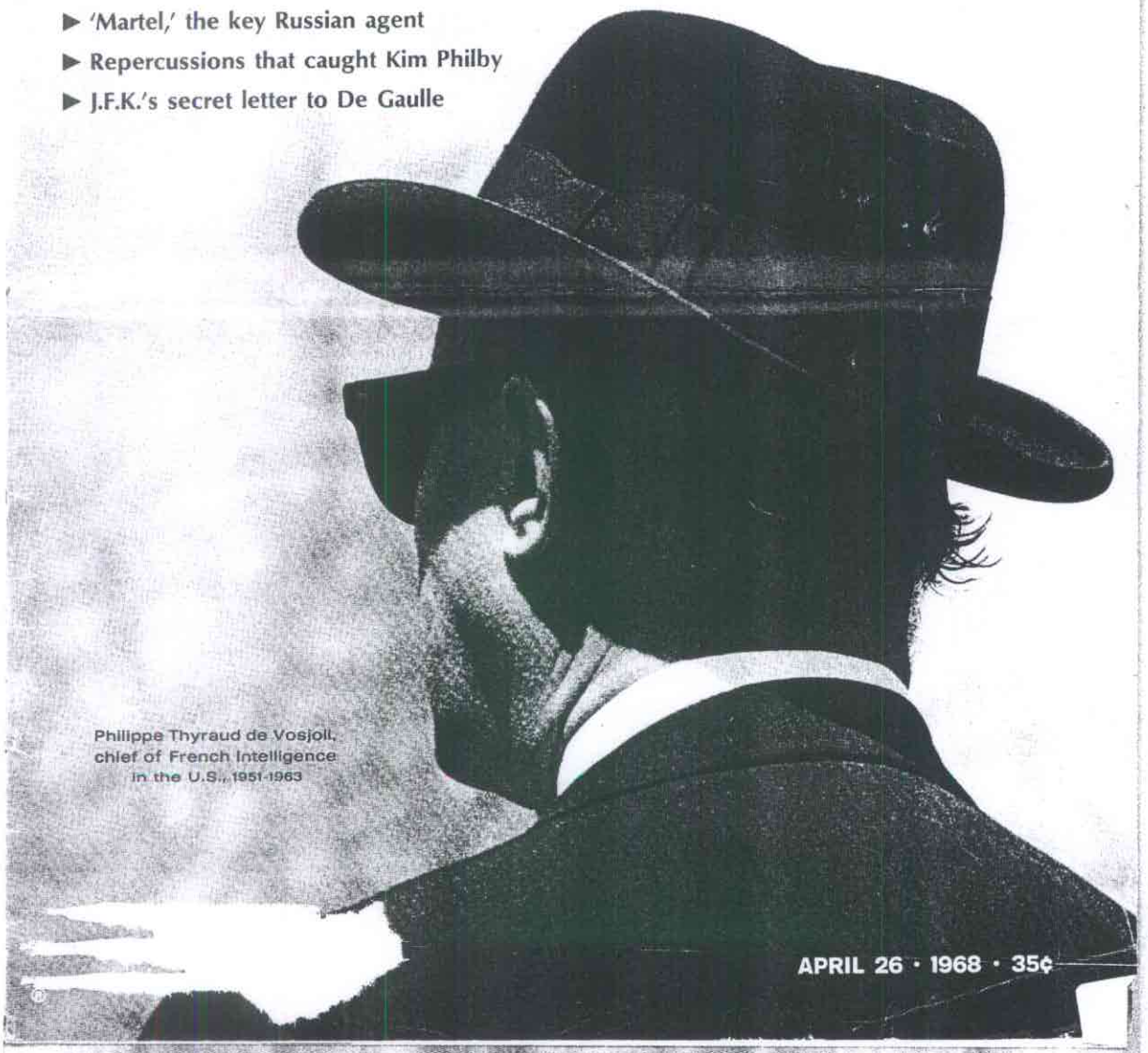
LIFE

THE FRENCH SPY SCANDAL

The former chief of French Intelligence in the U.S. reveals the fantastic story of Soviet espionage that penetrated De Gaulle's official family

- 'Martel,' the key Russian agent
- Repercussions that caught Kim Philby
- J.F.K.'s secret letter to De Gaulle



Philippe Thyraud de Vosjoli, chief of French Intelligence in the U.S., 1951-1963

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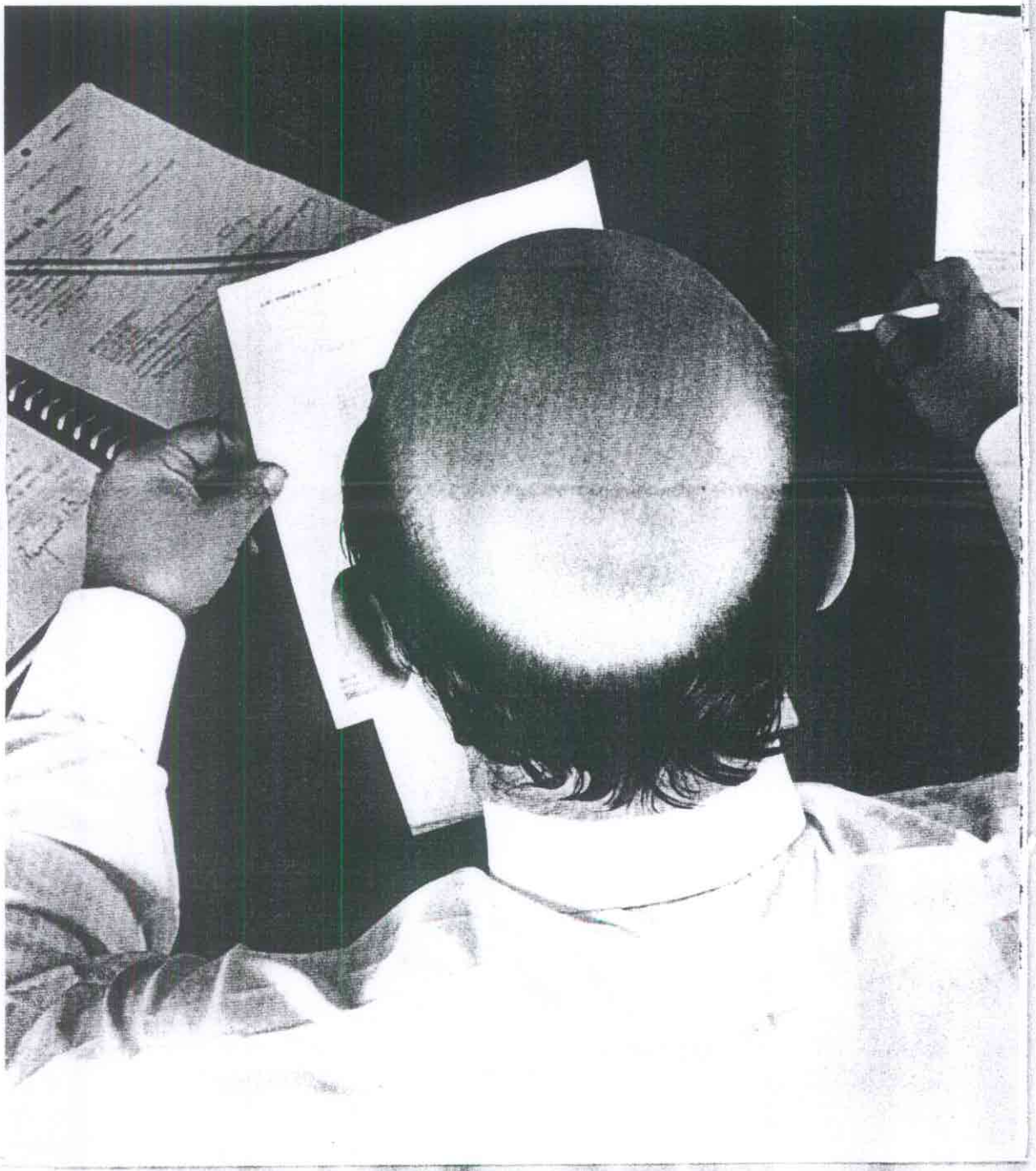
A Head That Holds



Some Sinister Secrets

The former chief of French intelligence in the U.S. tells a startling story: a KGB agent came over to the West. His disclosures unmasked Soviet spies in many countries. They revealed that De Gaulle's official family was penetrated by Russian espionage—which may still be operating there.

Inside this man's head, for six years, has reposed an extraordinary accumulation of knowledge—a set of facts that has touched the most sensitive nerve ends of a half-dozen nations and is now about to confront the government of France's President de Gaulle with an epic spy scandal. Even a forecast—made public in Paris last week—that LIFE would publish these facts brought hair-triggered denial and counterattack from French officials.

This man is Philippe de Vosjoli, who for 20 of his 47 years was a highly placed intelligence officer in his country's service. He tells his story—in full for the first time—on the following pages. This account is amplified by John Barry of the London *Sunday Times (pp. 38-39).*

Both accounts deal with the repercussions of disclosures by a very high-ranking officer of the KGB, the Russian state security organization, who went over to the West in late 1961. This agent, to whom French investigators gave the code name "Martel," now lives in the U.S. as a virtual fugitive; all that may be revealed about him is that he is a Red army veteran, was university trained in intelligence techniques by the KGB, rose to that body's prestigious First Directorate, possesses an encyclopedic memory, and left his post and the U.S.S.R. because he feared the warmongering policies of Khrushchev. He has been described as a man now in middle age, of middle height, on the chubby side, with jet-black hair, close-set eyes, lips he tends to keep compressed. His English is voluble but heavily accented. Published references have given his name as Dolnytsin, which is not correct.

As revealed in De Vosjoli's account, Martel's description of the extent of the KGB's spy network stabbed not only at his own country but at several Western nations and into the very heart of France. Directly or indirectly, he blew the "covers" of 200 KGB agents, including Britain's notorious H.A.R. "Kim" Philby and an American Army sergeant who killed himself. He demonstrated that NATO headquarters in France were so deeply penetrated that NATO secrets were deliverable to Moscow in 48 hours. Most serious of all, he had information pointing to the existence of a KGB spy among De Gaulle's closest, most intimate advisers. This moved President Kennedy to take extraordinary measures to warn De Gaulle of traitors close to him—a warning that De Gaulle, always suspicious of America, refused to heed.

Philippe de Vosjoli possesses impeccable credentials for his evaluation of the Martel affair. At the time Martel was being interrogated—mostly in Washington by Western emissaries—De Vosjoli was head of all French intelligence services in the U.S. It was a post he held for a long time—nearly 13 years—until French orders to establish a scientific and military spy ring against the U.S. moved him to resign.

Several years later, Leon Uris—a friend of De Vosjoli—published the best-selling novel *Topaz*, a highly fictionalized parallel to De Vosjoli's own story, embellished by some horrendous complications and a steamy romance. Since partial disclosure of the Martel case, De Gaulle's spokesmen have been dismissing De Vosjoli as "comic" or describing him as "a defector to the CIA." Nevertheless, mere disparagement is not enough to dispose of the questions that De Vosjoli raises or the valuable clues Martel brought with him when he decided to abandon the Soviets.

by PHILIPPE THYRAUD de VOSJOLI

So much has been

My first clear proof of the existence and special importance of the man we came to know as Martel arrived, so to speak, through the back door. It all started six years ago, in the late spring of 1962, no later, certainly, than the first days of June. One morning at 5 o'clock the telephone rang in my bedroom, in the house I used to have on Wilson Lane, in Bethesda, just outside of Washington. "M. de Vosjoli?" a voice asked. "Yes," I said, "if my senses are to be trusted at this hour." "Pardon, this is ---," the voice went on in French, giving the last name of a man well known to me as one of the senior officers of the French secret intelligence organization known as SDECE (standing for *Service de Documentation Exterieure et de Contre-Espionage*), of which I too was an officer. "I have just landed at Washington airport with five colleagues. Ask no questions, please, but I would be much obliged if you would send out a car to pick us up and arrange for a convenient place for us to stay for several days." As the ranking intelligence officer attached to the French embassy, I could readily command such services, and I assured my colleague—I will call him "X"—that his needs would be attended to. "X" with five companions descending on Washington unannounced, in the middle of the night? Something urgent must be afoot, of the utmost gravity, in Paris.

Just before noon, "X" entered my office on the second floor of the French consulate at 2129 Wyoming Avenue—a wonderful, roomy old building, encircled by tall white columns. Closing the door, he strode across the room to my desk, sat down facing me, and drove immediately to the point. "The director general," he began, "has instructed me to explain to you in the fullest detail why I am here, and how I and the others propose to proceed. I beg you not to take offense over the failure to give you advance notice of our arrival. The truth is that we are no longer sure of the security of our communications. We are not even sure our codes are safe. In fact, we can't be sure of who is getting our reports." From this ominous preface, "X" launched into the following extraordinary account:

Some weeks before, a special courier had arrived in Paris from Washington, bearing a personal letter from President Kennedy to President de Gaulle. The letter informed De Gaulle that a source in which Kennedy had confidence had stated that the French intelligence services, and even De Gaulle's own cabinet, had been penetrated by Soviet agents. Because of the obvious implications of such a security breakdown, the American President had chosen to employ a personal courier to transmit the warning, rather than depend upon possibly vulnerable, more formal channels. Kennedy further assured De Gaulle that he would provide his representatives with whatever means or contacts they might desire in verifying the value of this information for themselves.

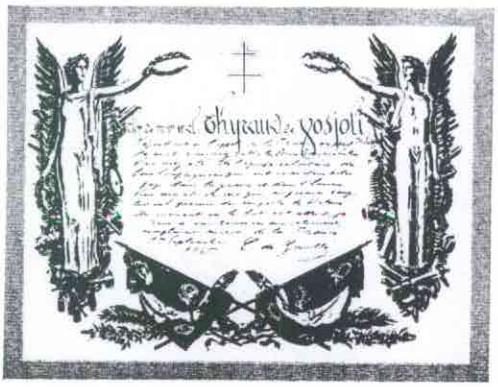
To make a preliminary reconnaissance, "X" continued, De Gaulle had picked General de Rougemont, an officer with excellent connections in Washington. De Rougemont was attached to the prime minister's office as director of the Second Division of the National Defense staff and had the responsibility of coordinating the various branches of the military intelligence.

About a week after Kennedy's letter reached De Gaulle's hand, De Rougemont had slipped into Washington—avoiding completely all his French friends, including me—and made contact directly with the American authorities. The source of President Kennedy's information, he was told, was a Russian who had been a high-ranking officer in the KGB, the huge state security apparatus through which the Soviet Union conducts its foreign espionage. De Rougemont was taken to the man, to ask such questions as he wished. He was later to say that he had begun the questioning half-convinced that the whole thing was some sort of trick by which the Americans were trying to dupe De Gaulle. But after he had put the Russian through three or four days of intensive questioning, it was De Rougemont who came out shaken by the appallingly detailed information the man had on the innermost workings of the French government and its security and intelligence systems. The general flew back to Paris to make his report directly to De Gaulle's trusted assistant, M. Etienne Burin des Roziers, secretary-general of the Elysée Palace and, as such, the aide who manages De Gaulle's staff and organizes the presidential business. Manifestly on De Gaulle's command, Burin des Roziers summoned the heads of the two main French intelligence establishments —General Paul Jacquier, an air officer who had been put in charge of SDECE only a few months before, and Daniel Doustin, who ran the equally powerful DST (*Direction de la Sécurité du Territoire*), the counterintelligence division, the French equivalent of the FBI. The gist of De Rougemont's report was that the KGB man was authentic, that he was indeed as important as the Americans claimed him to be, and that his assertions about the KGB's infiltration of French services demanded further and much more exhaustive questioning of the Russian by French counterintelligence experts, together with a complete checkout of the evidence which he stood ready to give. The two services—SDECE and DST—quickly assembled from their own staffs separate and expert interrogation teams, each made up of three men. These were the men with whom "X" had arrived in Washington during the night. After telling me all this, "X" said: "Our only business here is to question the source. We have a number to call and the meetings with him are to be arranged by our friends. I expect that we shall be at this for some time."

I was not, as a matter of fact, altogether surprised to learn that such a figure as the Russian existed. The intelligence community of Washington is a freely circulating body of professional military officers and civil servants inside the diplomatic community who are permitted to present themselves openly but not blatantly as intelligence officers. A certain amount

Evidence of his service

De Vosjoli was forced out of the French secret service four and a half years ago by pressure from Gaullist officials, but he has credentials attesting to his work for De Gaulle in earlier days. The scroll below, in De Gaulle's handwriting, was sent to all the "good companions" of the Free French Forces. Those at the right pertain to a mission De Vosjoli undertook in 1944. His mission order directs him to fly "as quickly as possible" to Calcutta and Chunking and to make liaison with French forces there. His passport is at the far right. De Vosjoli's job, with the end of the war in sight, was to organize French resistance to the Japanese in French Indochina and help prepare the way for the reentry of French forces there.



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swept under the rug

of informal and more or less honest brokerage goes on among the members, and in the winter of 1961-62 I had picked up some strong clues that the Americans had recruited, or otherwise gained custody of, two and possibly three defectors from beyond the Iron Curtain, and that one of them in particular had brought very important information out with him. Naturally, I had sought out the Americans I knew who were in the business and asked about the reports. In every quarter but one I was put off with either a profession of ignorance or a bland smile. The closest I came to the truth was a guarded disclosure by an American friend that a Russian had come over who exhibited an "amazing knowledge of the inner workings" of Western security networks, including the French, but the man was being difficult in regard to his future prospects and well-being. This meager information I passed on to SDECE in Paris and for some weeks thereafter I received daily cables pressing me to find out who the man was, where the Americans were hiding him, and what he was telling them. Now I met a blank wall. Then, abruptly, there arrived a jarring order from Paris: I was to cease my efforts to track down the man and to stop asking questions about him. The reason for that peremptory, almost insulting directive was now made clear by what "X" had told me. It must have been that Kennedy's letter had reached De Gaulle, a decision had been taken to send De Rougemont secretly to Washington to assess the reliability of the source, and it was thought best to order me off the scent, lest I complicate matters.

At this juncture—before the interrogation teams had begun their work—I remained somewhat skeptical of the Russian's real value. It still seemed possible to me that he might be a clever plant—a double agent—whose mission was to disrupt relations between my country and the U.S. Beyond that, I was unhappy at the way the Americans had broached the affair to my government, however urgent their concern. There were at that time any number of career intelligence officers high in the SDECE and the DST known by their American counterparts to be trustworthy beyond question. The grave implications raised by the Russian could and should have been first made known at that professional level. Instead, by being passed over everyone's head to De Gaulle, Kennedy's letter unnecessarily and unfairly impugned everyone in both services and created almost impossible tensions and suspicions everywhere.

The questioning of Martel—the code name given the Russian by "X" and his colleagues—began forthwith. I was kept fully abreast of what he was saying.

One of his early and most disturbing assertions was that French KGB agents in NATO headquarters in Paris were so strategically placed and so facile in their methods that they could produce on two or three days' demand any NATO document Moscow asked for. A whole library of secret NATO documents, Martel insisted, was available for reference in Moscow. Indeed the KGB's familiarity with supposedly super-secret NATO material was so intimate that its officers, in ordering fresh material from its sources in Paris, freely used the same numbering system for documents as NATO did itself. Thinking to trap the Russian, my colleagues asked him if he had himself ever seen NATO documents. "Oh, yes," was the confident answer. "Many." At a later meeting, a collection of some scores of classified NATO documents, dealing with different subjects, was presented to him. Most

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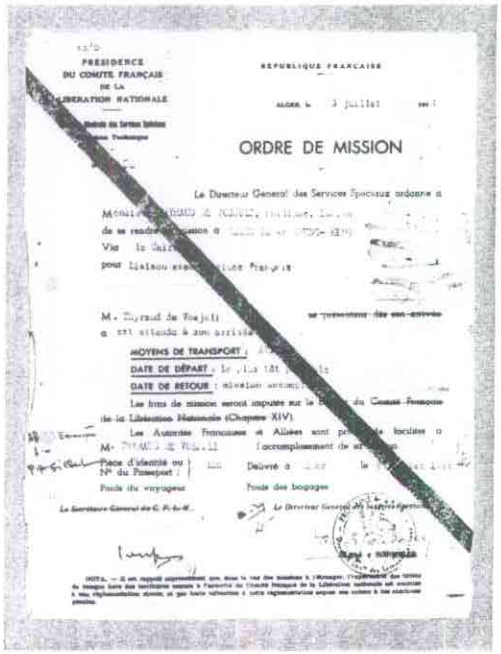

PRESIDENCE
DU COMITE FRANÇAIS
DE LA
LIBERATION NATIONALE

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

ORDRE DE MISSION

Le Directeur General des Services Spéciaux ordonne à

MOYENS DE TRANSPORT :

DATE DE DÉPART :

DATE DE RETOUR :

Les frais de mission seront imputés sur le Budget du Comité Français de la Libération Nationale (Chapitre XIV)

Les Autorités Françaises et Alliées sont priées de faciliter à

Pièce d'identité ou N° du Passeport :

Poids du voyageur

Poids des bagages

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

108

La Validité du Présent Passeport est de UN an

PASSEPORT DE SERVICE

Au Nom du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française,

Nous, Ambassadeur de France

Monsieur Philippe THYRAUD DE VOSJOLI
Inspecteur de la Mission Militaire Française
en CHINE

Alger, 5 Juillet 1944

GEN. DE ROUGEMONT

BURIN DES ROZIERS

GEN. JACQUIER

Investigation but little action

French officials reacted quickly to the news of Martel's disclosures. General Jean-Louis de Rougemont was sent to Washington to examine Martel. When he reported his conclusions, Etienne Burin des Roziers, one of De Gaulle's top aides, ordered an extensive investigation, part of which was directed by De Vosjoli's boss, General Paul Jacquier, chief of the SDECE. But, strangely, although months were spent little action was taken on the leads that Martel supplied.

tion then left to the West, the CIA apparatus having been all but annihilated by Castro in the bloody aftermath of the Bay of Pigs. Castro's Communist allegiance was treated by the Kennedy administration more as an annoyance than a threat until the summer of 1962, when a sinister question attached itself to the expanding Soviet military presence in Cuba. The Soviet *military collaboration with Castro* had begun openly enough with the dispatch of small groups of advisers and instructors. Then, for no clear reason, service troops and other types of Soviet technicians emerged in considerable numbers in and around Havana. The increase could be partially accounted for by the explanation that the Russians were equipping the Cubans with antiaircraft missiles in the SAM class, along with other defensive weapons. Even so, one wondered what Castro possessed that he was so anxious to hide, and that summer unverifiable reports began to circulate in Washington that the Russians were also bringing in batteries of offensive missiles, the so-called medium-range ballistic nuclear missiles—MRBMs—which would most certainly be a thrust of the gravest consequence for all the West. My voluble sources in Cuba were producing no definite or "hard" intelligence to support such a conclusion, and neither, so far as I could gather, were the American sources. Then, at the end of July, reliable intelligence from the island reported that the port of Mariel, on the northern coast of Cuba, was filling with Soviet ships. I decided to fly to Havana and check up on things for myself. I had the opportunity to discuss the situation with the director of the CIA, John McCone. There is no longer any need to be silent about this. At the time I believed that French and American interests in the situation were identical. Furthermore, my general instructions stipulated that I should not only keep my government informed about Communist activities in the Caribbean and Central America, but that I should work closely with the Americans in this particular.

In any event, when I left Washington for Havana in August, I had a very good idea of what to look for, and the operation I organized produced an enormous amount of information—as many as 50 or 100 separate reports a day. Naturally enough, not all of the intelligence was of the same quality, but most of the evidence pointed in the same direction. The most compelling single report came from a former noncommissioned French officer who had served with the American Army in Germany. This man *knew* the difference between a SAM antiaircraft rocket and an MRBM. He had seen on a road huge, multiwheeled tractors transporting Russian rockets under canvas covers. They were, he swore, "bigger, much bigger" than anything the Americans had in Germany.

What I learned I passed on to Paris and shared with the American intelligence authorities. I do not wish to suggest that my contribution to the outcome of the crisis which followed in October was in any way crucial. But I am certain it helped. I have had the thanks, in private, of John McCone.

My superior, General Jacquier, arrived in Washington on Oct. 5 for the purpose of getting acquainted with the American intelligence authorities. A suspensefulness hung over the first encounter with the American intelligence people. Nearly six months had elapsed since the Kennedy letter, and nothing had changed in France. The Americans were concerned not only about the penetration of our intelligence services but specifically over the apparent invulnerability of a certain official close to De Gaulle around whom Martel had seemed to close a ring of evidence. I had in fact been impelled as early as May to warn Jacquier that rumors were circulating in Washington that this same man was already marked as a possible Soviet agent. A month before Jacquier's arrival in Washington, the British arrested Vassall, and other actions were imminent; the absence of action in France was disquieting. At an otherwise agreeable dinner in Jacquier's honor one evening at the elegant 1925-F Street Club, which was attended by the most senior American intelligence officials, Jacquier was quietly but emphatically put on notice that American patience was running thin. An American intelligence officer who knew what the Russian had told the investigators said bluntly to Jacquier, "Your service is infiltrated. We know that you are not at fault, because you are new in your job and new at this business. But you must take the right measures." There was a plain warning in this that American cooperation in intelligence matters would stop unless the suspected spy was removed from the line of communications.

Jacquier and I spent hours together. In our long discussions, he referred several times to the Kennedy letter and the steps being taken by the SDECE to pursue and weigh the leads supplied by the Russians. When I saw him off to Paris, he carried under his arm a briefcase stuffed with memoranda which I had helped to prepare. But I doubt that Jacquier took any of this seriously.

Early in December, he called me to Paris for a meeting on urgent business. The SDECE headquarters on the Boulevard Mortier, close to the Porte des Lilas, occupied what used to be an army barracks, a gloomy, gray compound surrounding a spacious courtyard. Jacquier's office was on the second floor. His greeting was disconcertingly cold. First, he said, I was to see Colonel Mareuil, whose office was on the floor below. Mareuil was in charge of coordinating SDECE's liaison with foreign intelligence. He put to me two extraordinary propositions. First, I was to supply a certain officer with the names of my principal sources in Cuba. Second, I was to organize a clandestine intelligence network in the U.S. for the specific purpose of collecting information about U.S. military installations and U.S. scientific research. "The Americans," Mareuil said, "have refused to help us with our *force de frappe*. We must find how to proceed on our own. General de Gaulle is adamant."

The first suggestion I rejected indignantly and out of hand. If there is one inviolable rule in the intelligence business, it is that one never discloses the identity of a source. It is a matter of common sense.

As to the second proposition, I could not believe my ears. This was the very scheme Martel had revealed to his French interrogators months before. I told Mareuil that the idea would be difficult—impossible technically—and that it would most certainly invite the rupture of relations with America if ever it was uncovered. I doubted, in any case, that I was the man for the work. "No matter," Mareuil said smoothly. "The adjustment can be made. The matter is to be discussed at length tomorrow."

I was confident that Jacquier would put matters to rights. But I was to discover that suddenly he seemed to be overshadowed by his staff. At a meeting next morning with the senior members of the SDECE staff, I unexpectedly and unaccountably found myself having to defend my actions with respect to Cuba. Out of the blue, I was accused across the table by my colleagues of having acted without instructions in supplying French-gathered intelligence to the Americans. This accusation was followed by a worse one: I had misled President de Gaulle into supporting the Americans, with spurious evidence that the Russians had introduced offensive missiles into Cuba. It had since been established to French satisfaction, they argued, that the missiles were merely defensive weapons of the Russian SAM type—I had been duped by the Americans. And France, consequently, had been unwittingly put into a difficult position with the Soviet Union.

It was crazy. But the dreadful argument went on past noon. When it was over, I burst into Jacquier's office. "Look," I cried, "what is going on? What does this mean? You knew that I was authorized to work on Cuba. You gave me written orders. You wrote that you were pleased with what I did." Jacquier was flustered and embarrassed. His response was a lame one—something to the effect that my reporting from Cuba had left De Gaulle no choice but to sup-

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of the papers were authentic; a number, however, had been fabricated in Paris for the occasion. The whole lot was put down before the Russian and he was asked to pick out those he had read in Moscow. He did not identify all of the papers, but every paper that he claimed to have read in Moscow was authentic, and among the papers he put aside were all the bogus ones. It was, for the French teams, an unnerving experience.

Martel gave the French interrogators another turn with an exhibition of an all but encyclopedic knowledge of the secret workings of the French intelligence services. He described, for example, in rather precise detail how a thoroughgoing reorganization of the SDECE had been carried out in the beginning of 1958. He further knew how and why specific intelligence functions and objectives had been shifted from one section to another, even the names of certain officers who were running certain intelligence operations—details of a nature that could have come only from a source or sources at or close to the heart of the French intelligence organizations. Martel did not know everything. In some areas, he had only bits and pieces of intelligence to offer. He would tell his questioners, for instance, that in a certain city in the south of France, a member of the municipal council who had made a name in the Resistance was really a Soviet citizen—an "illegal," as we say in the trade—who had acquired a false French identity and was under KGB discipline. But he did not know the man's name—only how he fitted in. Martel knew that a French scientist of Asiatic origins, who had attended a certain international meeting of scientists in London, had been recruited there by the KGB under particular circumstances. Again, no name—only a whiff of a treasonable association. He knew that an intelligence officer who had been posted to certain Iron Curtain countries during certain periods (periods which he *did* know) and who was then attached to a specific section in a certain security service had been a KGB agent for a certain number of years. It was not in the least surprising that Martel did not know the names of these agents. He was not personally running the KGB networks for whom these people worked, and for purposes of evaluating the intelligence they supplied it was quite sufficient for him to know only in a general way where they were placed. Martel's work in Moscow had required him to sit in on many KGB staff meetings which reviewed or directed Soviet intelligence operations in a number of countries, including France, and he additionally was more directly involved in other operations. It was from his memory of these operations that he drew the links to France and supplied the leads which could be checked out there.

The French counterintelligence teams were thorough. They sat down with the Russian day after long day. They pressed him hard. Everything he said was caught on tapes. The tapes were run back at the end of the day, the leads were separated out, and every night a long coded summary went out to SDECE headquarters in Paris. In the interests of security the teams had brought special codes with them and did their own encoding. At the end of a fortnight the teams returned to France, taking with them all the tapes and hundreds of pages of transcript. Investigations were started on the basis of the leads Martel had supplied; and then, after further questions developed, the teams flew back to Washington to pick and test the memory of the Russian afresh. They would present a name to Martel—the name of someone who was thought to fit a certain lead he had supplied. Martel would be given certain particulars about the man's work, his position, his travels, and then would come the hard question: Could this man be the one who was working for the KGB inside NATO or in the political area at, say, the ministerial level? In his careful way, Martel would answer, "He looks to be," or "Yes, he could be," or "No, there's a discrepancy."

In the course of these interrogations, Martel would open other avenues for investigation:

- The Ministry of the Interior, which has responsibility for internal security; the French representation in the NATO organization; the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were all penetrated in the higher echelons by KGB agents.
- An official who appeared to be presently a member of the De Gaulle cabinet and who had ministerial or near-ministerial rank in 1944 in De Gaulle's first government had been identified in KGB discussions as a KGB agent.
- A network with the code name Sapphire, consisting of more than half a dozen French intelligence officers, all of whom had been recruited by the KGB, was operating inside the SDECE itself.
- A new section for collecting scientific intelligence had been, or was being, created inside SDECE with the specific mission of spying out U.S. nuclear and other technological advances, eventually in the Soviet interest.

I myself had no way of assessing the accuracy of Martel's leads, but there was no mistaking the impact he had on my colleagues. His familiarity with France's supposedly most secret affairs first astonished, then depressed them, as it did me. I could no longer doubt that Martel was the genuine article, although I still was not convinced that everything he said was true. His assertion that French intelligence had a scheme for spying out American scientific secrets I found hard to accept at the outset. Yet the Russians had been most specific on this point. In July 1959, he insisted, he heard General Sakharovsky, in charge of the KGB's covert operations, analyze for his senior staff officers the implications of the reorganization of the French intelligence services. In the course of the lecture, Sakharovsky mentioned the plan for the proposed intelligence section, with its targets in the U.S., and noted with satisfaction that the KGB expected to receive any reports within a day or two after SDECE got them. All this was supposed to have happened nearly three years and a half before. When Martel's account was related to me, in my office, one of the DST men asked his SDECE counterpart, "Really, are you people doing this sort of thing?" None of us had ever heard of the scheme.

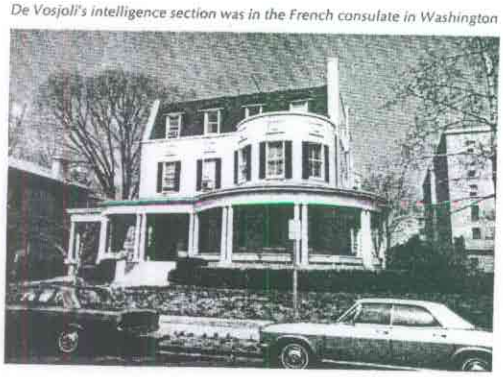
As the questioning of Martel went on through the summer, the procedures being used by our people to follow up Martel's leads began to create an increasingly difficult situation for me in my own work. Our teams would do some preliminary work at home and return to Washington with a number of names, any one of which might fit into the necessarily meager framework of facts Martel had offered. But Martel could never answer with absolute assurance either "yes" or "no" about any of them. The problem in this for me—and, in fact, for the whole French intelligence system—lay in the fact that each session with Martel was also attended by American representatives, and each time our people dropped a name in front of Martel, that person automatically became suspect to the Americans. Small wonder, but as the list of clouded reputations lengthened, my professional contacts with the Americans (and with other Western nations) began perceptibly to dry up, even on routine matters. The word seemed to be out not to take any chances with the French.

What should have happened in this situation—and what I expected would happen—did not happen. The French secret services should have pursued Martel's leads vigorously to a straightforward finding, for or against. They then should have been able to say, "We have investigated and found something wrong with this one and this one. But the other people are clear." Instead the services remained silent. In truth, nothing at all seemed to happen.

I must here depart from the story of Martel for a moment to describe an episode having to do with Cuba. As will be seen, it did eventually have a connection with Martel and with the whole direction of French policy toward the rest of the West.

Among my responsibilities in the middle of 1962 was the direction of a French intelligence effort in Cuba. Basically, I may say, as an intelligence operation, the Cuba one was really more like the gossipy exchange of confidences in a love affair than a relentless pursuit of state secrets. But it was prolific, to say the least, and for all of its informality it was by far the best source of informa-

De Vosjoli's intelligence section was in the French consulate in Washington



ward the name to Paris. Not long afterward, word came from Cuba that the source had been arrested. The French ambassador advised me in a separate message to be discreet when next I returned to Cuba. "You have a difficult name to pronounce in Spanish," he said. "But friends who have attended espionage trials here believe they have heard your name mentioned several times." I never went back. A little later I was ordered from Paris to cease working on Cuba altogether. My inquiry as to who would take over there went unanswered. The network of faithful people who had served the West so well in the missile ordeal died on the vine. It was becoming obvious that my superiors in Paris wanted me out.

Then a very senior American intelligence officer passed on to me, as being of particular interest to French military intelligence, two documents which between them supplied a rationale of certain highly intricate administrative structures inside the Soviet defense establishment. The American warned me to be exceptionally careful in handling them. I sent them on, with special security precautions, to Jacquier. Some time later, there arrived at the consulate by ordinary diplomatic pouch, innocent of classification, a general staff critique stating that the reports were quite worthless—nothing more than extracts from the Soviet press. One day my American friend asked me what reaction I had received from Paris. I told him, and he exploded. The papers, he shouted, were among the last pieces of intelligence to reach the West from the famous Colonel Penkovsky, who had been run down, tried and shot only a short time before. My friend added: "That information was first-class intelligence. Because the KGB was able to prove that Penkovsky had passed this information on to us, the Soviet defense establishment was obliged to make certain drastic changes in its military planning. Now you might ask your colleagues if they still need further proof that your service has been penetrated?"

I was miserable. I was now isolated from the Americans, as well as from my own service. If I had retained any hopes, they were dispelled by a strange incident arising from the arrest in June of the Swedish Colonel Wennerström as a Soviet spy. Wennerström, from long service in Washington as the Swedish air attaché, knew a great deal about NATO defense plans. He also had a strong reputation as a fun-loving partygoer, and I recalled now that he had been a frequent social associate of several French officers then stationed in Washington. I naturally moved at once to have these relationships examined, only to be ordered by Paris, in peremptory tones, to cease my investigations.

All that I had worked for in 12½ years of NATO collaboration was dissolving. In July, that last summer in Washington, I was notified of a promotion. It arrived with the warm congratulations of Jacquier himself. But I knew it was intended to silence me. And I let it be known that I would not be silenced. Over the years I had a good working relationship with my ambassador, Hervé Alphand, a highly experienced diplomat. Knowing that he was returning to France in August for a holiday, I decided to take him into my confidence. He had not been aware of Martel's existence until I told him what was going on. My point to him was that France's relations with the U.S. were being imperiled by the government's dilatoriness in facing up to Martel's assertions and would be ruined if the SDECE persisted in the scheme for mounting an intelligence operation against the United States. Alphand was upset. He promised to take up the matter at the Quai d'Orsay. In a little while word came back to me, through my private channels, that the Foreign Office had also been wholly ignorant of the existence and meaning of Martel until Alphand started to ask questions, and that there was fury in several quarters over my indiscretion in divulging so sensitive a topic.

In August Georges Pâques was arrested in Paris. He was a senior NATO official and undoubtedly one of the KGB's men there. But manifestly he was not the only one.

On 16 September a cable was laid on my desk. My mission in the U.S. was to end on 18 October. My relief would arrive in Washington in a fortnight. I would have two weeks to brief him on his duties. And then I was to report without further delay to headquarters in Paris. After all my years in Washington, I was being commanded to wind up all my affairs and pull up my roots in just one month.

I stayed on in my post to the last hour permitted me in my orders. On the morning of 18 October, at the desk in the consulate which I yielded in the afternoon to my successor, I composed a letter to Jacquier. In it I summed up the disquieting matters and concerns which I have described here. I ended it all this way:

Considering that the questioning I was subjected to on Cuba proves that some members of the service were worried over the efficiency of my work against the Soviets;

Considering that by demanding to know the identity of my sources (although you have been informed by American intelligence services of the presence of infiltrated Soviet agents in your organization), you committed an imprudence which could only serve the agents of a foreign power;

Considering that your order to collect intelligence on the United States, even at the price of a rupture of diplomatic relations between the two countries, could only benefit the Soviets;

Considering that the cancellation of my mission on Cuba, although the results obtained were outstanding enough to bring the Americans to thank you, was of benefit to the Soviets;

Considering that the contemptuous criticism of the Penkovsky reports can only serve the Soviets;

Considering that the lack of support showed by the service in an inquiry on the French contacts of Wennerström can only protect Soviet agents;

Considering that the orders I received were technically unrealizable or could only bring a crisis beneficial to the Soviets;

Considering that the vexations I received during the past nine months do not leave any doubt as to your determination to harass me and to neutralize the representative of French intelligence in Washington, whose knowledge is considered embarrassing;

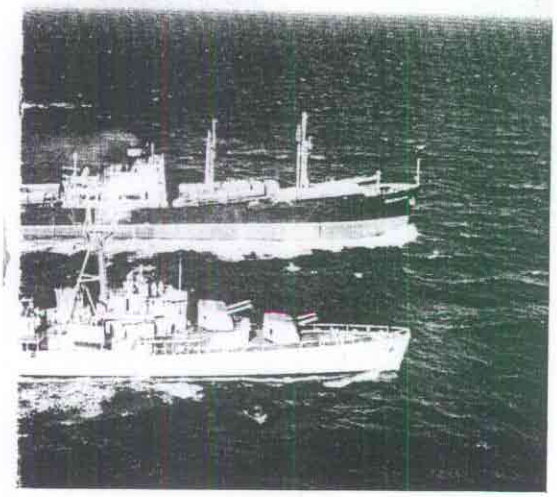
Considering that the reports received from American intelligence on the presence of Communist infiltration agents inside the service and inside the French government, have been corroborated by the Pâques Affair;

Considering that for all reasons mentioned above, it is impossible for me to cooperate in any way with the SDECE;

I have the honor to submit my resignation as of today, October 18th, 1963, reserving all my rights for future legal action.

P. L. Thyraud de Vosjoli

It was a harsh letter but I do not regret having written it. For the truth was in it. Six years have now passed and they have been hard ones for me. The deterioration of Franco-American friendship is now a fact which cannot be denied. The Martel evidence has still not been given the attention it deserves. One man—Pâques—was caught about a month before I left the service, and that is all. One arrest—and so much more that has been put out of sight under the rug.



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port the Americans against the Soviet Union and that was a mistake, a misunderstanding, that "we all have to clear up."

An unspeakable lunch followed in Jacquier's private dining room. The pressure on me never abated. I felt as if I were being put on trial. In another private session with Jacquier, the explanation for the hostility finally emerged. It was a bad time for relations between France and America. President Kennedy had met with the British in Nassau and concluded an agreement with them concerning nuclear forces and nuclear sharing that reaffirmed the special "Anglo-Saxon" relationship that De Gaulle detested. France was outraged and word flashed through the government that De Gaulle was through with the Americans. My mistake, I was told, was in continuing to work with them when I should have caught the signals of the sharp shift in course. Jacquier finally went to the heart of the matter. "Until now," he said, "you have been working in liaison with the Americans. That is all behind you, because we no longer consider America our ally, our friend. On the contrary, France must go it alone. France has no friends. You will get fresh orders and, remember, you will follow them. Do not challenge them, please. Just obey them, that's all."

The day before I was to take the plane back to Washington, I was summoned to Colonel Mareuil's office to receive my new instructions. A new officer was about to be attached to the embassy staff in Washington, under my control. He was to collect information relating to American military and scientific organization.

"Good God," I said, "you are not really going through with this?"

"You are," he said.

"But surely," I said, "you've read the reports from Martel?"

"Martel?" Mareuil demanded. "Who is Martel? What does he have to do with this?"

Did Mareuil really not know? Had the Martel interrogations been kept from him? Perhaps. They were being held very closely. I said no more.

Mareuil read aloud to me from three closely typewritten pages the operational requirements for the research against the Americans. The instructions included, among other things, a requirement for certain military particulars, such as the U.S. deployment of ICBMs, that had nothing to do with scientific developments.

"France has no need for this kind of information," I said. "It would be useful only to the Russians."

"The instructions are clear," was the comment.

I said it was all wrong. It wouldn't work. There would be great risk for all concerned. The answer was that the risks had to be taken and, should I fail, ample protection would be forthcoming. I asked for a written copy of the orders. Mareuil replied that since their mere existence constituted a danger, the copy in his hand was to be destroyed. It so happened that a new deputy for intelligence was about to be assigned to me in Washington, and at my insistence Mareuil read the orders aloud to me in that man's presence. My parting word with him was that if anyone attempted to carry out the plan, and if it miscarried, France would have to be prepared to sacrifice the long American friendship.

Jacquier being unavailable, I appealed to his principal assistant. "This business gets crazier and crazier," I said. "You know about the Martel affair. Somebody is out of his mind." The deputy answered that it was Martel who was out of his mind. "The Americans," he went on, "have thrown the apple of discord in our service. Because of them, everybody is suspicious of everybody else. We can no longer worry about the niceties. The orders, for your information, came from the highest authority, from the Elysée."

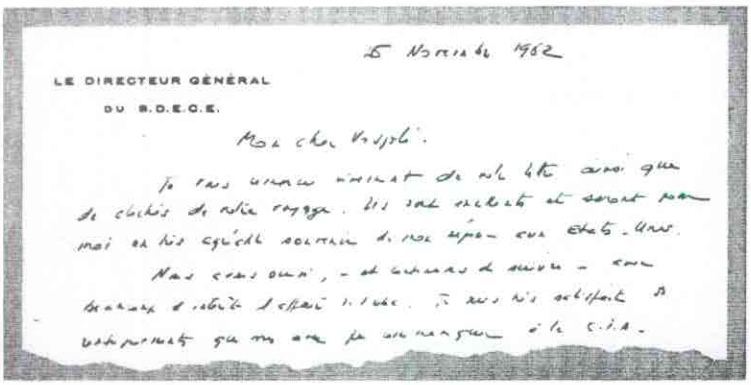
I returned to Washington very much disturbed, and worried about the future relations of France and America. As late as January 1963 I made an appeal to SDECE's chief of counterintelligence, who had come to Washington to measure Martel for himself, to abandon the spying enterprise altogether. He shared my misgivings but argued that it was too late now to cork the bottle. "We can pray," he said, "that SDECE's shortage of resources will keep the plan from ever being mounted."

I had asked Jacquier, when he was in the U.S., why the government had not moved faster on the Martel evidence. He replied that the government could not stand a scandal at the time, with the nation still just getting over the giving up of Algeria. It was a ready answer, given the place and time, but after all the other things I had heard and witnessed in Paris I was persuaded that other, possibly sinister forces were the real reason for the inaction. There was no mistaking the suspiciousness, the mistrust, even the hatred for American policies which had come to permeate the thinking of the men closest to De Gaulle.

Events in my own jurisdiction deepened my suspicions. About two months after the Paris episode, at the beginning of February, there reached me from Cuba a long and detailed report on the Soviet order of battle in Cuba after the withdrawal of the missiles. I passed the information on to SDECE and was astonished to receive a peremptory order to name the source of the report. I refused. Then Jacquier himself commanded me to give the name. One of my assistants, who worked with me on Cuba matters, begged me to comply. "You are in trouble enough now," he said. "After all, Jacquier does have the authority to ask." After considerable soul-searching, I finally sent for-

Praise for a job which was later condemned

Right after the Cuban missile crisis, when missile-carrying Russian freighters (like the one at right, flanked by a U.S. destroyer) had turned for home, De Vosjoli got a letter from his boss, General Jacquier, saying that he was "very satisfied with the intelligence that you have been able to communicate to the CIA"—a reference to his work establishing the presence of missiles in Cuba. Less than a month later, he was raked over the coals in Paris for having given the information to the Americans.



5 Novembre 1962

LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL

DU S.D.E.C.E.

Mon cher Vosjoli.

Broad impact of 'Martel' everywhere but France

The author is a member of a special team of the London Sunday Times, which for the last three months has been conducting its own investigation of the Russian agent known as Martel. The inquiry verifies many startling consequences of the Russian's information and draws conclusions about why the French may have handled the Martel case as they did. Here is his summary of their report:

by JOHN BARRY

Everyone grilled Martel. The Americans and British, next the Germans, then the French; finally even small non-NATO intelligence services like the Swedes' beat a path to Washington throughout 1962. Even when Martel, in a state of mental exhaustion, elected in the spring of 1963 to move to Britain for six months, the questioning continued. His knowledge of KGB operations was so complete and explicit that, as one source put it, "He killed a whole generation of KGB men—not physically, you understand, but as intelligence operatives."

The crucial fact in evaluating the consequences of Martel was that he compartmentalized his extraordinary information: each intelligence service that interrogated him learned, broadly, only what affected its own vital interests. Nobody except the CIA and possibly the British SIS (Secret Intelligence Service) knew Martel's full disclosures. Other countries could only examine with dismay their own gleanings, and wonder uneasily what was wrong elsewhere in NATO that they did not know about.

The acrimonious political debate in Western Europe at the time about the scheme for nuclear sharing through a multilateral naval force had already damaged NATO. Martel's accusations made things even worse: nobody trusted anyone. The result was the virtual halt of military information flow through NATO. For almost a year, beginning in the autumn of 1962, only the most fundamental information needed to keep NATO functioning was circulated. This situation almost persuaded a number of intelligence men that Martel was a Russian plant. The KGB might be losing agents, they argued, but most of those Martel betrayed were past their peak; and, in return, Russia was gaining a catastrophic political advantage. "If NATO does finally break up, the public reasons will probably include De Gaulle, the legacy of Adenauer and the thaw in the East," one politician in Britain said. "But one of the private reasons will be the distrust engendered by that damned defector."

Yet the suspicion that Martel might be serving Soviet ends vanished, for most intelligence people, in the recognition of how many Soviet agents were identified in the swift and scandal-ridden series of treason trials for which Martel was directly responsible. They indicate both Martel's consummate importance, and also the scale of the political problems that such trials caused for the governments concerned—political problems that, in the case of France, were to prove insuperable.

Britain had the first public whiff of trouble. Although NATO naval matters were not Martel's specialty, he possessed a few almost trivial details about policy decisions on Anglo-American naval exercises that could only have come from inside the Admiralty in London. It took a British counterintelligence team six months to track down the spy, an insignificant Admiralty clerk, a homosexual named William John Christopher Vassall, the 38-year-old son of a London curate. In September 1962, Vassall confessed; he had spied for the KGB for six years. The resulting scandal forced a minister to resign and led to an angry governmental inquiry into the press.

Then on June 25, 1963, bigger game was flushed out by the information provided by Martel. The Swedish government disclosed the arrest of a senior military diplomat, Colonel Stig Wennerström. First as Swedish air attaché in Washington, later as chief of the Swedish military purchasing mission there, and finally back in Stockholm as chief of the air section of the joint services liaison staff in the Ministry of Defense—in all, during 15 years at the sensitive heart of Sweden's defense system—Wennerström had spied for the KGB. In effect, NATO's northern flank defense plans were useless.

Barely a week after Wennerström was exposed, it was Britain's turn again. Edward Heath, Foreign Office spokesman in the House of Commons, rose to make an embarrassing admission. It concerned H.A.R. "Kim" Philby. Ever since 1951, Philby had been suspected as the "Third Man" who had tipped off the British diplomats Burgess and Maclean to flee to Russia. But in 1955 Foreign Minister Macmillan had publicly cleared Philby. Now, eight years later, Heath had the painful task of confessing that Philby had indeed "worked for the Soviet authorities before 1946. . . ." The uproar this caused did much to tarnish the Conservative government defeated in the elections next year.

Martel betrayed Philby, as he betrayed Vassall, Wennerström and other KGB agents, indirectly. The details Martel could reveal of SIS structure, personnel and history, and the amount he knew about joint CIA-British operations from the late 1940s on, were so precise that only Philby—the official groomed to be head of the service one day, the organizer of the SIS's first anti-Soviet section back in 1944 and later the key liaison man in Washington between the SIS and the infant CIA, the man who advised the CIA how to set up its own anti-Soviet network—could have known so much about so many operations. Warned of Martel, Philby fled to Russia before the SIS could catch him.

West Germany had its Philby too. One week after the scandal erupted in Britain, the espionage trial began in Karlsruhe of Heinz Felfe, ex-head of the "East Division" of West Germany's Federal Intelligence Agency, responsible for all the agency's operations in Eastern Europe. For 10 years, Felfe and a colleague named Clemens had systematically blown the agency, passing 15,000 documents to the KGB, betraying—according to one estimate—95 agents. For those picking up the pieces, there was the suspicion that Felfe and Clemens were not the only spies inside the FIA. Clemens was incautious enough to tell his interrogators that the KGB had asked him to change departments in the FIA because, they said, they were surfeited with information from the one he was in.

Nor did the U.S. escape. Martel's value for American counter-

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Spies of four countries who were flushed out

The chain reaction of espionage trials, confessions and suicides indirectly set off by Martel included William Vassall, British Admiralty civil servant who said he was blackmailed into passing secrets to Soviet agents; Swedish Defense Ministry official Stig Wennerström, who sold data to the Russians that compromised the NATO defenses; Heinz Felfe, who betrayed West Germany's Federal Intelligence Agency; U.S. Army Sgt. Jack Dunlap, a suicide after he was exposed as a $30,000-a-year spy for Russia.

VASSALL

WENNERSTRÖM

FELFE

DUNLAP

espionage lay in two broad areas of information. The first was his emphasis on the role in Russian espionage in America being played by "illegals"—longtime residents like Colonel Abel. Though the information was later credited to another agent, it was actually Martel who told the CIA of the Soviet military intelligence communications center where radio operators, working three to a shift, listened around the clock for "illegals" transmitting from inside the U.S. Again the arrests came in July 1963. Two Soviet couples living in the U.S. were charged with passing intelligence on American rocket sites and nuclear weapons shipments to Europe.

Another vital lead in Martel's information for American intelligence was his insistence that the KGB, after a late start, was moving rapidly into the technological age of espionage. It was concentrating, like the CIA, less on human agents and more on mechanical devices such as long-range monitors to pick up diplomatic wireless transmissions and even certain kinds of cross-country telephone and cable traffic. This type of espionage needs computers, which the KGB was getting, plus considerable expertise in code-breaking. Thus the National Security Agency at Ft. Meade, Md., the coding and ciphering service of the U.S. government, was the prime KGB target.

By June 1963, counterintelligence had uncovered a leak inside the agency. He was Sgt. 1/C Jack Edward Dunlap. The KGB, it transpired, had paid him $30,000 in his first year, and the KGB pays that scale of largesse only to its most useful informers. The sergeant managed to kill himself after interrogation, and the affair was kept under wraps for three months. When the story broke, in October 1963, the sergeant was described as "just a driver." It has never been explained why a driver would be worth $30,000 a year to the KGB.

In France, the reception of Martel's information—and the baffling consequences of it—might be attributed to De Gaulle's own attitude toward intelligence. De Gaulle has all the brave soldier's contempt for men playing at spies —an attitude Britain's Macmillan so fatally shared. And when Kennedy's letter reached him in the spring of 1962, De Gaulle was without an experienced intelligence adviser to lean on. General Paul Jacquier, head of SDECE, had been in his job for only two months after a lifetime in the air force. And Daniel Doustin, head of DST, was scarcely more expert; he had been at his post less than a year. Simple incompetence by the French probably played a large part in their handling of the Martel case.

The most suspicious point, for the French, in Martel's information was his insistence that General Aleksandr Sakharovsky, boss of the KGB First Directorate, had announced in 1959 that the French were planning a new department for scientific intelligence. This seemed inexplicable, because this new venture was not even *planned* until 1960. Martel, it seemed, was injecting into his 1959 memories information he could only have picked up later. Perhaps, the French investigators ventured, the word had come from the CIA.

Because by the middle of 1962 there was a plan to set up a scientific intelligence network. It was the brainchild of Louis Joxe, who at the start of the French nuclear *force de frappe* had been chosen by De Gaulle to overlord this project upon which France's prestige was staked. By 1960, it had become apparent that France could not afford these technologies. If America would not give her the know-how, France decided to steal it.

It occurred to the SDECE investigators that perhaps the CIA had got wind of this plan to gather intelligence for nuclear and space technology. SDECE had long suspected that there was a CIA agent on the personal staff of one senior French minister. Perhaps, the team thought, the CIA was seeking to warn off the French by demonstrating their power to embarrass De Gaulle.

One of the most senior men in SDECE at the time put the Gaullist case this way: "We could never be sure whether it was Martel talking or the CIA. We accepted that there was a French spy in NATO. We decided to track him down. But none of our men got more than vague hints from Martel that there was anyone *beyond* this man. All the talk of someone in high places came via the CIA.

"I assure you," he went on, "that although we treated that information with some circumspection—because of our suspicions of the CIA, you see—we made every effort to find such a man. But we were never given any specific leads."

This Gaullist explanation does not account for the fact that the search for an agent in high place was called off by personal orders from De Gaulle. His long-standing fear of an American "hegemony" over Europe was, in this case, deepened by the uneasy relationship that had existed between French and American intelligence operations over the years.

After the immediate post-World War II crisis in France—in which American activists, semiofficial and approved by the French governments of the time, had fought Communism in France—the U.S. continued to maintain a large intelligence network working out of Paris. That network was concerned not only with espionage against the Eastern bloc, which scarcely helped De Gaulle's Russian policy, but also with keeping an eye on the French political scene. It would be surprising if America had *not* done this. As De Gaulle himself has said: "Great powers do what they must." America could hardly be oblivious to events in the country housing NATO headquarters.

But at the time Martel was telling his story, De Gaulle was trying to break American—and also British—intelligence in France. (Among his suspicions about the CIA was the irrational belief that the agency had financed the French colonialist terrorist movement, the OAS.) He anticipated a CIA reprisal to his move, and Martel's story of a leak from the level of his own cabinet fitted all too neatly.

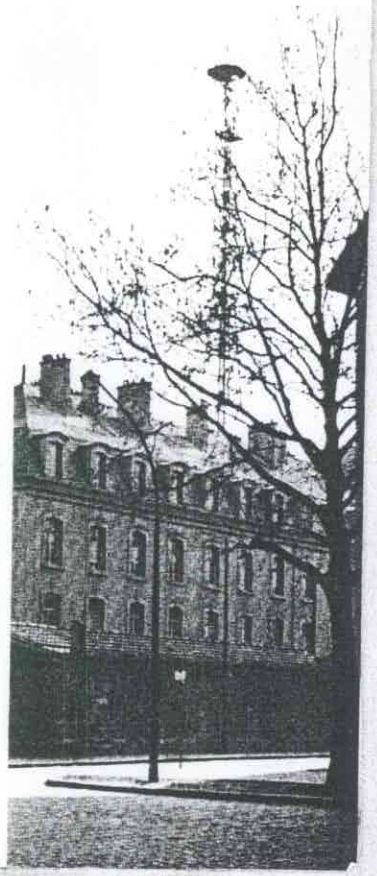
As a first step, in January 1962, De Gaulle ordered SDECE and the DST to concentrate on Western agents in France as much as Eastern ones. Those who protested were threatened with purges. As the culmination of his program, the real purpose of Jacquier's delayed protocol visit to Washington in October 1962 was to inform the CIA, politely but irrevocably, that the French secret service would go it alone. In future, Jacquier warned the Americans, France would operate independently: SDECE would cover the world—West as well as East.

Meanwhile, the SDECE team investigating Martel plodded on, checking as their first priority the military secrets leaking from NATO. It took them rather over a year to clinch their inquiry. On Sept. 23, 1963, the arrest was announced of the "deputy information officer" of NATO, Georges Pâques. He was Martel's NATO spy. But his job title and the carefully vague *curriculum vitae* produced in court deliberately misled everyone as to his real importance.

For Pâques could also fit Martel's specifications for the high-ranking political spy. He was, in fact, one of the most respected civil servants in France: It was said that he had written speeches for every prime minister in the Fourth Republic. There was no postwar government in France in which Pâques did not hold a sensitive post—and he confessed he had spied for the KGB since 1944.

So the French took stock. Pâques could have accounted for most, if not all, of the political leakage Martel revealed. But he could *not* have provided all the NATO material, so there had to be another military spy still at large. And Pâques could *not* have provided Martel's information on SDECE, so the French intelligence officers working for the KGB, under the code name Sapphire, were still in business. Pâques's career certainly did not fit the pattern of clues that Martel had given to the identity of the high KGB agent.

What was De Gaulle to do now? With the settlement of the bitter Algerian war just concluded, he was not about to risk a scandal that would set off a right-wing coup d'état. He took a decision subtle and typically Gaullist. He decided to ignore the rest of Martel's political information.



SDECE headquarters in Paris, a former army barracks, is topped by a huge communications tower.