

Khomeini was Russ agent, ex-espionage chief claims

NEW YORK (UPI) — The Soviet penetrated the Shiite Moslem sect as early as the 1950s and the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was a Russian agent at that time, according to a Polish army counter intelligence chief who defected to the West in 1960.

The charge against the Iranian revolutionary leader was made Friday in an announcement by a California law firm negotiating with Bantam Books for publication of the memoirs of the former Polish espionage chief, Col. Michael M. Goleniewski.

Attorney Howard Lipton, speaking for the firm, said the memoirs were expected to be published in about six months.

Lipton said Goleniewski learned of Khomeini's activities on behalf of Russia when the colonel was deputy chief and vice director of Polish army counter intelligence from 1953 to 1956.

David Aldrich, a former senior editor of Look magazine who is editing Goleniewski's book, said the colonel informed the CIA of Khomeini's espionage role when he was debriefed by the staff of then director of counter intelligence James Angleton at the agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

Aldrich said Goleniewski told the CIA that Khomeini was the most important of five top Russian agents in Iran and that he reported to a high Iraqi government official, who in turn passed information to the Russian KGB through its agents in Warsaw, where Goleniewski was headquartered.

Goleniewski transmitted some 8,000 secret documents on microfilm to U.S. intelligence from 1958

through 1960, when he defected to West Germany, according to Aldrich and other sources. He was brought from there to Virginia where he was debriefed over a period of three years and was given asylum. He is now living in New York.

Aldrich said the colonel provided the CIA with a Soviet scenario for infiltrating the Shiite Moslem sect, which was troublesome to Stalin and succeeding regimes. About one fifth of the Soviet population traditionally belonged to the Shi'a and Sunni Moslem sects.

Aldrich said events in the Middle East, including those of the last few days, have followed the scenario closely and that Goleniewski has warned of Shiite Moslem uprisings throughout the oil-rich Persian Gulf states.

Among the espionage cases known to have been documented by Goleniewski were those of Gordon Lonsdale, George Blake, John Vassal and several other top British Soviet agents, Swedish Colonel Wennerstrom and Israel's Colonel Beer.

After taking up residence in the United States, Goleniewski stunned CIA officials by asserting that he was born Grand Duke Alexei of Russia.

This claim has never been officially accepted by the U.S. government or by any surviving members of the imperial Romanoff family. The Czar, his empress and their five children are believed to have been executed by Russian Bolsheviks in Siberia in 1918, but there has been considerable evidence put forward in recent years that the execution was faked.