

Guyana Exploits KGB Tie to

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GEORGETOWN, Guyana—So many strange things happen in Guyana, long a playing field for the world's two foremost intelligence agencies, that it seemed almost inevitable to many informed diplomats and Guyanese that the KGB and CIA would somehow become involved in the Jonestown affair.

True to form, both intelligence services have kept busy in the aftermath of the Nov. 18 tragedy. For all the recent failures of the CIA to remain clandestine in this case it is the KGB that has come under public scrutiny.

It is generally known that the Soviet Embassy here was regularly in touch with the Peoples Temple over the last year and that the chief liaisons on the Russian side were KGB agents stationed here.

What could be worse for Valery A. Koval, a senior KGB officer and chief of the Soviet intelligence operations here, along with Alexander Kramarenko and Vladimir Kasatkin, reputed KGB officers, than having their identities known to almost every reporter in town?

Indeed, Western observers here can hardly contain themselves when they talk about how embarrassing Jonestown has turned out to be for the KGB and the Soviets, who initially thought they could reap a propaganda victory at the expense of the Americans when 900 deaths occurred.

Within days after the world learned of the mass suicide-murder, the Soviet news agency Tass called the incident

another example of the sickness and decadence that pervades the United States.

But that was before Guyana's Prime Minister, L. Forbes Burnham, decided that the way to dam the stream of embarrassing questions about his government's relationship with the Peoples Temple was to expose links between Jonestown and the Soviet Embassy.

Apparently the idea was to make clear that the Soviets stood to lose if Burnham's Marxist opposition—led by Cheddi and Janet Jagan, who have admitted close ties with Moscow—continued to insinuate that the Peoples Temple received special favors from the government in return for money, women and political support.

According to informed sources, Burnham's decision to play his Soviet card was made easier because he was disenchanted with the Soviets even before Jonestown gave him an opportunity to embarrass them.

Last spring, Burnham visited the Soviet Union, hoping to persuade Moscow to make massive loans, credits and grants available to shore up Guyana's tottering economy.

The Soviets refused to help Burnham, although his government is "non-aligned" against almost every position the United States supports. Last October, the prime minister, who was originally installed in 1964 with CIA support because Jagan was the only alternative, openly criticized Moscow for refusing to come to his aid.

After the incredible events of Nov. 18, the *Mirror*, the People's Progressive Party newspaper edited by

Janet Jagan, pounced on Jonestown as an example of the poor judgment and corruption that it said pervades the Burnham government. The prime minister looked vulnerable.

But ever the master politician, Burnham began to dribble out bits of information some of it available from Jonestown survivors questioned by Guyanese police, some available from documents seized at Jonestown and some of it already in the possession of Guyana's security police—detailing the Soviet links to the Peoples Temple.

Although Jonestown survivors told reporters soon after the mass suicide-murder that Soviets had visited the remote commune on more than one occasion, and that the Rev. Jim Jones spoke of moving the temple to the Soviet Union, the first hard evidence of how involved the Russians were came Dec. 6:

The *Chronicle*, a government-controlled newspaper, published a memo from temple files detailing a March 30 meeting between emissaires from Jonestown and Timofeyev, third secretary of the Soviet embassy. He is now identified as a KGB major.

The meeting, according to the memo, concerned the possibility of moving the Peoples Temple to a spot near the Black Sea. The meetings continued on a weekly basis, according to informed sources here, and Timofeyev visited Jonestown at least twice last year.

When the first *Chronicle* article did not stop the Jagans from pressing their attack on Burnham, the government made public letters from Jonestown to the Soviet embassy sent just as the suicide-murder rite began.

The letters listed bank accounts were \$7.2 million in temple money was deposited and instructed Timofeyev to withdraw the money for use as the Politburo in Moscow saw fit.

Last month, Guyana's Foreign Ministry said it had received from the Soviet Embassy a suitcase containing 87,000 Guyanese dollars and some tapes that had been brought to the embassy by the Peoples Temple hours after the suicide-murder was over.

The Guyanese, pointed out that it took the Soviet Embassy 18 days to hand over the suitcase. Whether all of the tapes or money originally in the suitcase were sent to the Foreign Ministry is unknown.

Foreign journalists in the meantime were talking with Jonestown survi-

Jonestown

vors—several of whom had met regularly with the Soviets. It did not take long for reporters to find Guyanese and Western sources who identified these contacts as KGB officers.

Meanwhile, Cheddi Jagan was in the Soviet Union for two weeks in December. While his newspaper is still pressing for an official inquiry into the Jonestown affair, its charges against the Burnham government have softened noticeably over the past weeks.

Although the Soviets have said little about their links with the Peoples Temple, some Western diplomats and Guyanese suggest that the Russians thought bringing the temple to the Black Sea might prove a counter to the Carter administration's charges of Soviet human rights violations.

Jones often had charged that the temple was being persecuted by U.S. government agencies that were conspiring to destroy him because he was a socialist.

"We don't know whether we're coming in on the initial feelers extended by the KGB to a left extremist group or the consummation of a long and mutually satisfactory relationship," one Western intelligence source remarked.

"Perhaps we'll never know, but it is frankly sinister that Soviet contact with the Peoples Temple here should be undertaken solely by KGB officers," the source added.

Some Western diplomats here, apparently based on reports from their embassies in Moscow, suggest a dispute at high levels of the Soviet government over how to handle the Peoples Temple affair. These sources say some Soviets would like to issue a statement blaming embassy contacts on overzealous—and uninstructed—diplomats in the embassy here.

However, no statement has been issued, leaving the diplomats to surmise that the KGB does not want its officers embarrassed.

The best evidence of CIA involvement after the Nov. 18 incident has to do with a mysterious cable sent at 8:18 P.M. the night Rep. Leo Ryan was killed. According to a reporter who saw the cable, it told of those who were killed and wounded at Port Kaituma, information the State Department did not have until late the next morning.

Washington Post special correspondent Gregory Rose contributed to this article.