

Read a Paper, Be a Spy

By Tad Sauls
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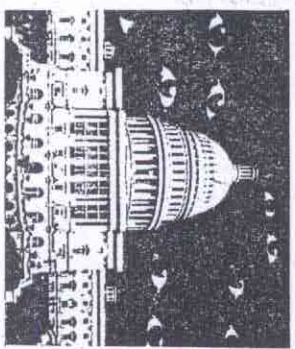
Washington

In Washington, as the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has noted, the chief espionage threat comes from the Soviet Union. Soviet espionage occurs in both overt and covert forms, through a series of interlocking mechanisms. Most of the overt work is conducted by the KGB "rezident" section of the Soviet embassy on 16th street northwest, though the section also engages in clandestine operations.

The identity of the "rezident," the Soviet counterpart of a CIA station chief abroad, is usually known to the United States government, just as the agency representatives in Moscow is known to the Kremlin. This is one of the rules of the intelligence game.

It is assumed that a large percentage of the 135 members of the Soviet Embassy — 18 of them are military attaches — who enjoy diplomatic immunity are active KGB operators. So are scores of support personnel — drivers, household personnel, secretaries, and so on — who do not have diplomatic status. The same goes for the large Soviet mission to the United Nations and the Soviet Consulate General in New York.

In any event, every Soviet citizen in the United States is thought to be under KGB control and thus a potential espionage



agent. The 35 Soviet news correspondents in the United States — 13 stationed in Washington and 22 in New York, although the latter often visit the capital — also fulfill intelligence functions.

The KGB in Washington has a distinct advantage over the CIA in Moscow when it comes to the collection of overt intelligence, which when properly analyzed can be just as vital to the Soviet perception of American activities as top-secret information obtained through clandestine means.

This is so primarily because the United States is an open society and because Washington is a treasure trove of information available to anyone for the asking. Obviously, American press, radio, and television reports are a major source of general knowledge. Conversations with Soviet diplomats demonstrate how extraordinarily well informed they are about American society — although some experts here worry

about how well they understand it and report it back home.

The Soviets supplement their reading of the general press with study of specialized journals — military and technical publications on everything from nuclear science to applied chemistry and such magazines as Aviation Week, which often provides new insights into research and development of weapons and delivery systems.

It turns out, too, that the Soviet government and Eastern European governments are among the best clients of the Government Printing Office. The purchase annually hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of booklets and pamphlets on every subject imaginable, for direct shipment to their capitals. Ninety percent of the kinds of information the Soviets acquire openly in Washington would constitute state secrets in Moscow.

Soviet diplomats attend congressional hearings in which they have special interest, and study the Congressional Record and committee hearing prints for hidden gems of knowledge. Soviet correspondents, especially newsmen from Tass, the Soviet news agency, complement the diplomatic effort in the acquisition of data on everything pertaining to the United States.

For one thing, Tass correspondents file tens of thousands of words daily back to Moscow, but

only a tiny fraction of this material finds its way into Soviet newspapers. The bulk goes into four special Tass bulletins intended for the leadership, and arranged according to security classifications.

Each bulletin has a special color. The violet bulletin provides news that can be printed at the discretion of Communist party authorities. The white bulletin is confidential and used only for reference; it goes to editors-in-chief, managing editors, and commentators. The red bulletin, stamped "secret," contains what a Georgetown University study on Soviet information networks calls "dangerous news." It is factual, but it may contradict the material in the violet bulletin; it is delivered by an armed guard.

The fourth bulletin, which has no special color, is reserved only for Politburo members and other top party leaders. It is known as the "special bulletin" and it contains "anti-Soviet" material and highly secret factual information. This system is also used by Eastern European news agencies for consumption by their governments. All these bulletins contain items from correspondents around the world, although most of them come from the United States.

TOMORROW: Spying at cocktail parties
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