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Former British spy-catcher a Soviet agent, paper says

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London—With reaction still fermenting from last week's disclosure that a leading former diplomat was deep into child pornography, Britain was faced yesterday with serious allegations that its former chief spy-catcher was actually a Soviet agent.

And it all comes little more than a year after the admission that Sir Anthony Blunt, surveyor of the queen's art collection, had confessed in 1964 that he had spied for Moscow while he served in Britain's counterespionage agency, known as MI-5, during World War II and had been a recruiter for Soviet intelligence.

The allegation that the late Sir Roger Hollis, who capped a brilliant intelligence career by serving from 1956 to 1965 as head of counterintelligence, was a KGB agent for 30 years, came in a front-page article in yesterday's *Daily Mail* by Chapman Pincher, one of Britain's most distinguished newsmen.

And Mr. Pincher, who is publishing a book on the subject, wrote that during the week he will follow up with "details of other spies, once respected people in our society, who also sold their souls to the KGB, who betrayed their country and their friends."

It has long been speculated that there were several other traitors who had served in British intelligence services but whose identities, like Sir Anthony's, were covered up after they were unmasked.

The case against Sir Roger, as reported by Mr. Pincher, reads like something straight out of John Le Carre's "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy." It has just as many complex relationships, which—if they are all true—may well have seriously affected the West's postwar intelligence capability, and which certainly leave British intelligence looking very bad.

William Whitelaw, the home secretary and acting premier while Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is out of the country, was reported yesterday to be getting rush briefings on the Pincher allegations. Mr. Pincher said he believes that the charge "is bound to lead to calls for a full-scale inquiry into the whole history of his country's intelligence community since the end of the war."

There was a resolute silence yesterday at 10 Downing street on the article's implications for Britain's intelligence service so soon after Mrs. Thatcher admitted in the House of Commons that Sir Anthony had been granted immunity for admitting that he had indeed been a Soviet spy and was the "fourth man" in the spectacular case in the 1950s of three other renegade Britons: Donald MacLean, Guy Burgess and Kim Philby, who still lives in the Soviet Union as a KGB general.

But the implications of the Hollis case are even stronger because he rose to such high rank in MI-5. As director-general, Sir Roger was responsible for counterespionage, counter-sabotage, counter-subversion and protective security, which included the weeding out of security risks.

The "kiddie porn" scandal moved into a new phase yesterday with reports that Scotland Yard was mounting an investigation into who told Geoffrey Dickens, a Conservative member of Parliament, that Sir Peter Hayman, a former British high commissioner in Canada and deputy military governor of Berlin, was deeply involved in a child pornography ring. Mr. Dickens, who also charges an "establishment cover-up," said yesterday that he would go to jail before revealing his source.

He said he had been under intense pressure, including pressure from a senior minister, not to name Sir Peter.

In the case of Sir Roger Hollis, however, Mr. Pincher acknowledged that the evidence is circumstantial, because the man never cracked under "an official and unprecedented interrogation covering the 30 years during which he stood either near or at the top of this country's security services."

Sir Roger retired in 1965, but was recalled secretly for that interrogation and for another session at a "safe house," Mr. Pincher said, and the year after he died an independent investigation of the record was conducted by Lord Trend, former secretary to the cabinet.

Some MI-5 officers were not satisfied with the results of the original probe, which also involved the possibility that another senior MI-5 officer had also been a spy.

Mr. Pincher said Lord Trend—who was unavailable yesterday for comment at his Oxford home—concluded after three weeks that there was a strong case that MI-5 "had been deeply penetrated over many years by someone who was not Sir Anthony Blunt."

He named Sir Roger Hollis as a likely suspect, "the circumstantial evidence against him being so weighty as to demand explanation."

Lord Trend found that "Hollis had not cleared himself during the interrogation . . . had provided unconvincing answers to the searching questions which had been put to him and his memory had been at fault only when it suited him," Mr. Pincher said.

He said Lord Trend had found from the evidence that "Hollis had consistently frustrated attempts by loyal MI-5 officers who investigated the obvious penetration of their service. His behavior during the investigation into Anthony Blunt had been particularly suspicious."

Mr. Pincher said Lord Trend recommended that the case against Sir Roger should be left open "pending the possible arrival of further evidence from a new defector from the Communist bloc or some other source."

Lord Trend's report was circulated to a very small group of top-ranking officials, Mr. Pincher said, and it criticized the long delay in starting the original investigation by "people either unwilling to believe that they [Sir Roger and another man, who was finally cleared] had been spies or determined to cover up for them."

Sir Roger, son of the Anglican bishop of Taunton, joined MI-5 in 1939 after leaving Oxford and working in China for nine years for the British American Tobacco Company. He contracted tuberculosis and was sent to Switzerland for treatment. He returned to England in 1938, and within a year had won a place in MI-5.

He received promotions and in the early 1950s became deputy director-general of MI-5 and in 1956, the top man. The queen knighted him in 1960.

Mr. Pincher wrote that in 1975 Michael Hanley, then director-general of MI-5, told Prime Minister Harold Wilson that "one of his predecessors seemed to have been a renegade working for the other side." Since then, Prime Ministers James Callaghan and Margaret Thatcher have been told the facts of the case, he wrote.

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