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SUBJECT Interviews With Former CIA Officials

BILL KURTIS: The world espionage has once again moved from the fiction shelf to the front page. Latest example, the bombshell revelation of a former Soviet diplomat at the United Nations.

ARKADY SHEVCHENKO: I had everything except very small thing, my own personal freedom. Or I have to live in a country where everything, everybody has to be hypocritical, even in the family.

KURTIS: Because of Arkady Shevchenko's frustrations with his own land, he decided to defect. But first, while serving as Undersecretary General of the United Nations, he spent nearly three years spying for the United States.

Our cover story this morning, the ground rules of the spy war.

With us, former CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner. And with him in our Washington studio, Cord Meyer, who was once the Agency's Chief of Covert Action.

Admiral, let's start with you. Why would someone betray their country to spy for the United States, withour referring directly to Mr. Shevchenko?

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Over history we've found there are four or five different reasons, Bill. One is ideological. People in a country like the Soviet Union, where the ideology is bankrupt, sometimes feel our ideology is so much better, that they want to help it.

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Another is that they simply are mistreated by their own country and they want to get back at them.

Sometimes it's simply money.

Sometimes they're adventurers.

And then, Bill, sometimes they're what we call double agents. They really aren't willing to spy for us. They're working for their own country. They're feeding us a little bit of information, some of it true, but then they're also feeding us some bad information to try to throw American policy off course.

KURTIS: I would think that we would have to be careful about that.

Mr. Meyer, how does an agency make sure that we're not dealing with a double agent?

CORD MEYER: Well, there are mechanical means of reducing the risks. In other words, you can and you should apply very effective lie detector tests to them, under a man capable of handling that. And the KGB is known to be seriously worried about those tests and the way they reveal people lying.

On the other hand, the real and only proof is the capacity of the agent, over a period of time, to produce accurate information and intelligence that is deeply damaging to the Soviet Union. In other words, he would not be a double agent and be doing that. And it's the proof of the pudding is the goods that he produces.

KURTIS: Accuracy would seem to be, would be a key element.

We now have spy satellites. Why do we need spies on foot?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you know, Bill, there are two different ways of getting intelligence information. One is through very technical systems, like the satellites you mentioned, like listening systems that intercept conversations or messages. Then there's te human intelligence category. We've had human spies with us since the beginning of intelligence. They'll always be here, they'll always be necessary. They fill in the blanks today in what the technical systems cannot do. You can't see inside a building, for instance, with photographs. You can't listen to all conversations. And you can target a human agaent against the specific things you want to know. You can tell him, "Go get me this, or that."

Most particularly, the human agent can look inside

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people's minds to find out what they're thinking, what they're planning to do next.

KURTIS: Now, the Admiral cannot speak about Mr. Shevchenko specifically. But Mr. Meyer, I was reading through some of his memoirs that have been excerpted and was a little surprised to find out that the quality of information that was getting through to the Soviet Union didn't seem to be of the highest. For instance, he describes Mr. Gromyko as being rather surprised that the prices were so high in New York City.

Do you think, really, that the information is getting through? And what is the quality?

MEYER: Well, it's a reason of concern, I think, to anybody who watches the world situation and knows a little bit about the Soviet Union's inside workings. They do bring to their life and to their actions a preconceived ideological framework that makes it extremely difficult for them to really understand how our society works and to respond to it. And it did not surprise me that Gromyko should have been as isolated as that made him out to be.

The unfortunate fact is that the people in the Kremlin are the ones who are quite isolated. Whereas the KGB agent who spends ten years in a foreign country gets to know it quite well, often enough leading to his defection. In other words, the inside in the Soviet Union is surrounded by the carapace of propaganda and ideology, and it's only when those inside serve in the outside world that they begin to understand what they're up against and what the real world is like.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I talked to Shevchenko, Bill, when he first defected, and he told me that there is such fear in the Soviet system, that people reporting on up to the top often have to color their stories. They can't really tell it like it is. Because if they happen to come up with a fact, or their own conclusion, which disagrees with Marxist ideology or theory, they are subject to a lot of criticism if they tell it that way. So the story doesn't always get pushed up the line as the people who collect the information really do understand it.

KURTIS: He said [of] Mr. Gromyko, all he sees of the Soviet Union is a view through the bulletproof windshield of his car going into Kremlin, and describes this elite power structure that rarely comes in contact with the populace.

MEYER: That's correct. The fact of the matter is that the nomenclatura, the top bureaucratic leadership in the Soviet Union enjoys a great many privileges that the general Russian population has no access to. And I think this is getting to be

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more understood by the general population in Russia over time.

And therefore, the great importance of our foreign radio broadcasts, both VOA and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, reaching into the Soviet Union to try to inform those people much more accurately as to what is really going on. It's a long-term hope, but a very real one.

KURTIS: Is that what we learn from this, Admiral, as a lesson from the Shevchenko affair?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. I think we learn that one of our greatest strenghts is our freedom and our openness. We can, of course, when our agents collect information, tell it to our President or any other official exactly as we see it. That's the ethic of American Intelligence: Don't pull any punches. Don't let your intelligence be politicized by what the listener wants to hear. That's a tremendous strength. It's an advantage American Intelligence will always have over that of any totalitarian system like the Soviet Union.

KURTIS: What's the significance of such a high official, let's say, turning to a spy and spying for the United States, Mr. Shevchenko?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think it really indicates that when people understand the Soviet system thoroughly, as Shevchenko certainly does, and have lived and understood the United States thoroughly, as he did for many years in the United Nations, they understand where the choice lies and which country has the best system.

KURTIS: Mr. Meyer, were you surprised when you heard about Mr. Shevchenko?

MEYER: Yes, I was surprised, although not completely surprised, because we've had over the years a number of very high-level and important defectors, some of them from the KGB itself.

And as a matter of fact, it's worth stressing that a lot of what we know about the internal workings of the Soviet regime and its intentions has come both from espionage agents and from high-level defectors who have brought that information to us, in the belief that we needed it in order to cope with the intentions of the Soviet leadership. It's been a very important part of what we've learned over the years.

KURTIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Cord Meyer and Admiral Stansfield Turner.

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