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SUBJECT Admiral Stansfield Turner

JOEL SPIVAK: Let me introduce you to Admiral Stansfield Turner, who during the Carter years was the Director of Central Intelligence. He ran the Central Intelligence Agency.

Admiral, thanks for taking this phone call.

We've got a little problem out here. Perhaps you've heard about it, with the consulate up the street here. Did you read about all of that?

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Yes, I certainly have, Joel. And I might just tell you that for a year and a half, back in the late '60s, I lived at 999 Green Street, right up the street from this consulate.

SPIVAK: Oh, good. I suppose they were listening to your phone calls, Admiral.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I was just a naval officer then, Joel. I don't think they bothered with me.

SPIVAK: Well, look, in the best of all possible worlds, I guess anybody could understand why the folks who live here are pretty damn mad about that. But just as a matter of fact, Admiral, from your vantage point, you know, it seems to me that the KGB operates pretty freely in this country, don't they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, they certainly have a lot of advantages here, since the era of detente. They have not only large numbers of people in their consulates and embassies, and then they have the advantage of the United Nations staff, also, which is peopled with KGB operatives from the Soviet Union. But

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we now have more exchanges with the Soviets, cultural, scientific. And we have lots of visits, as you know, in San Francisco from Soviet merchant ships, and they put people ashore.

All of these give them a lot of opportunity to put KGB intelligence agents into our country.

SPIVAK: Well, Admiral, you know, coming here from Washington and reading the papers about this, it makes me kind of -- I don't know. This sounds awful to say in San Francisco. But it makes me kind of chuckle a little bit. Because in Washington, you know, it's like part of the landscape. I mean the people here I don't think realize the KGB -- well, listen to me telling the former Director of Central Intelligence. They go to congressional hearings, don't they, Admiral?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, they certainly do, and they're all over Capitol Hill here. We can be concerned that we give them a lot of advantages here that they don't give us in their country. And there's no question about that.

SPIVAK: Well, that's the thing that really galls me, Admiral Turner. I mean I went by there the other night, and here they are sitting in a house over here on Green Street up high, I mean in one of the highest sections of the city, where they can use their electronic monitoring devices to listen to everything between here and God knows where. And it's the same thing in Washington, where their embassy is on, I think, the highest single point of land in the city, isn't it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's correct.

SPIVAK: Yes. Well, why in the world -- you know, I'm sorry, Admiral. I don't mean to get mad. But I mean why did we give them this kind of stuff, when our embassy, for instance, in Moscow is in a swamp, isn't it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's certainly down in a gully.

SPIVAK: Yes.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't know. We were foolish to do that. It was done many years ago -- that is, the agreement on their embassy and their consulate, and so on. And they were just more adept than we were at that time in doing these negotiations.

Let me point out there is one other more favorable side to this unequal situation, and that is that the Soviet Union is a closed authoritarian society. When the people from the Soviet Union do get out and come to our country, and they come here in rather larger numbers than we send to the Soviet Union, I think

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that we, in the long run, benefit. They know after they've been in our country, no matter how loyal they may still be to communism, that communism doesn't work like capitalism does. They know that our freedom in this country is something precious, and they would like to have it back there.

So I think, on balance, while it's tough on our spying to give them all these advantages -- it gives them an advantage in spying, is what I mean -- I think the other advantage of opening up a closed society to view what life could be like if they weren't so communist gives us some long-term advantages also.

SPIVAK: Well, now, Admiral, here they are up here right up the road with this place up in Pacific Heights where they can see -- now, we have absolutely -- correct me if I'm wrong, Admiral. We cannot tell them, evidently, what kind of electronic stuff they can put in that place. They can do any darn thing they want to.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Joel, we could. But, of course, they would retaliate with our installations in the Soviet Union.

SPIVAK: I see.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's a game back and forth.

SPIVAK: Let me give you an idea, Admiral, of some of the rhetoric that's sailing around here. This is all -- I guess that this comes up periodically in San Francisco. But since this latest FBI caper, Admiral -- this is part of an editorial that appeared in The Examiner on Sunday. It says here, "Several times in the past year we have noted that the Soviet Consulate in this city is something other than a diplomatic facility. Our contention has been that the looming house on Green Street in the affluent heights overlooking the bay is almost altogether a nest of spies and the equivalent of an electronic satellite on Earth whose purpose is to pluck the most sensitive U.S. secrets."

Now, that's, you know, rhetorically pretty good, Admiral. And here they are right out in the middle of the high-tech world, where they can listen in on practically anything. And they have the capability, don't they, Admiral Turner, to be able to listen to practically anything they want to?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, yes and no. We, during the Carter Administration, started a program, and I assume it has continued, to take Washington and New York and San Francisco and Chicago, where we know the Soviets do these things, and protect the most important communications. In your case, those largely

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to Silicon Valley. And, you know, the ones they intercept from those antennas on the roof of their consulate are ones that go by microwave or come down from satellites. Now, you can arrange to have the important conversations put on what we call land lines, just like an old telephone cable. And those electronic antennas on the roof are not useful in that instance. We've done a lot of that.

There's been talk in the press in the last few days that the new Administration, the Reagan Administration is going to try to have encryption devices, coding devices on more telephones. And we've got to do that kind of thing anyway.

Joel, if we aren't careful, if we don't protect our communications from any kind of an attack, whether it's from their consulate or their satellites up in space, or whatever it might be, technology is going to get at us one way or the other.

SPIVAK: Sure.

ADMIRAL TURNER: What I'm saying is we've got to put encrypted telephone receivers on our telephone systems, where it's very important. We've got to send our cables in code rather than -- even from industry in Silicon Valley -- rather than in the open language, to protect ourselves properly.

SPIVAK: Well, Admiral, I don't doubt what you say is true. And yet I know that there are people listening who are just, you know, biting their lips right now, thinking to themselves, "Yes, but right up there on the hill there are a whole bunch of spies, and everybody knows it."

And, you know, it must be funny to hear me saying this from San Francisco, Admiral, I mean, but it's just true. I mean the whole world knows what goes on up there, and yet we seem to be pretty powerless to do much about it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's terribly frustrating. But as I say, there is another side to the story in terms of our ability to maintain consulates and embassies in other countries, also.

And again I would like to reemphasize -- I don't think I made it quite clear enough -- that if you were to take all those antennas off the embassy, or the consulate, in time, technology will give them another way of doing the same thing.

SPIVAK: Sure.

ADMIRAL TURNER: We'd better protect our communications at their source, where we originate them. That's, I think, the key point.

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SPIVAK: It's funny to see them. Of course, I haven't met any of the consular officials or KGB people, or whatever they are, Admiral, here. But I used to live right near the embassy in Washington and I used to see them, especially during the snow-storms, they used to be walking around there with designer jeans and everything on, you know. And it's just the juxtaposition of life in the Soviet Union as opposed to here. And here they are spying on us. It just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make much, anyway.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It certainly seems that way.

One thing that we haven't done, and I think we need to do, is protect ourselves inside the Soviet Union more. You won't find one American going into that consulate to work in San Francisco. You will find several hundred Soviets going into our embassy in Moscow, or our consulate in Leningrad, every day because they're on our payroll.

SPIVAK: Why is that? I mean why do we make an agreement with the Soviet Union like that, Admiral?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, we are unwilling to find and pay Americans to go do rather menial-type chores in a place like Moscow. Life is too unpleasant. And you just can't afford to pay people to be janitors and other kinds of routine duties like that all the way from the United States.

I think we should afford more of it, Joel, and I think the State Department ought to cut down the number of employees on the Soviet side....

SPIVAK: We'll be right back with Admiral Turner here in just a moment.

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SPIVAK: Admiral Stansfield Turner, the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is our guest. And we're just talking about this consulate up on Green Street that gets people PO'd in this city every now and then.

The latest machination, as all of you know, is this business with the vice consul up there, who is an unindicted co-conspirator in that case where an FBI agent allegedly was turned by a couple of Soviet emigres and they got him to give information about FBI counterintelligence. Of course, that case has yet to be tried.

Without -- obviously, you've got to be careful what you ask Admiral Turner, because he's not going to divulge any state

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secrets here. But just in general, when a case like this comes up involving a Soviet consular official who has been alleged --and I want to emphasize that, alleged -- to have been a part of an attempt to turn one of our people, even though he cannot be prosecuted because he has diplomatic immunity, Admiral, isn't there a standard operating procedure for telling somebody like that that they're no longer welcome in this country?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. He almost certainly, in due course here, will be declared persona non grata, which means we'll give them a certain number of days for him to get out of the country. That's done regularly.

In 1978 there was an interesting case, Joel, though. We caught three Soviets trying to get classified information from a U.S. naval officer in New Jersey. Fortunately for us, unfortunately for the Soviets, the U.S. naval officer was working for the FBI, and we trapped these people. And it turned out, though, that only one of the three had diplomatic status. We took the other two to court and we convicted them, 50 years in jail.

SPIVAK: Really?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

Now, at that point we decided we would get more national satisfaction out of trading those Soviets for a group of dissidents from the Soviet Union, Soviet citizens, who wanted to get out of the Soviet Union. And that was more rewarding to us, to let those people come out and become American citizens, than it was just to lock these two chaps up for 50 years. And so we did that a few weeks after they were convicted.

SPIVAK: Well, I don't have to tell you, Admiral, that quite aside from -- that's quite a story you just told. I wasn't aware of that. But the whole idea of diplomatic immunity just PO's people something awful, especially when something like this happens. And I gues, you know, it's hard to think about it unless you stop to think of our folks who are overseas in all these foreign postings who are in the same boat. I mean, conceivably, they could be thrown in the slammer over in the Soviet Union too, couldn't they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. It's much more important to us than it is to them, even. Because we're not only talking about the possible spying activities by Americans abroad, but what we're talking about is the normal diplomat over there who just happens to do something they don't like, you know. And their laws are so different than ours, their whole procedures are so tight and so obtrusive that it's easy for our people to inadvertently get into trouble. And if they were subject to the

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laws of those countries, we would find it very difficult to get diplomats to go and serve in those places.

SPIVAK: Well, who has the responsibility here, Admiral? And obviously, the CIA is involved with intelligence gathering overseas. The FBI has responsibility for domestic intelligence gathering. But who has direct responsibility for telling, well, for instance, a Soviet diplomat who has diplomatic status to leave the country? The State Department?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. That's got to be done by the State Department. But in this kind of a case, of course, the FBI will be a very big part of the consideration there because they're the ones now who are trying to prosecute. They can't, of course, force this fellow to testify, but they may have some reason they don't want him, necessarily, to leave right away.

SPIVAK: Yes. Okay. Stand by here just a moment.

Admiral Turner has got to go in a few minutes. But if any of you are still, you know, riled up about this and you want to commisserate with the former head of the Central Intelligence Agency about it, you can call 956-KNBR....

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SPIVAK: Our guest is Admiral Stansfield Turner, the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Carter years. And the reason we called Admiral Turner at home was because I figured he might have a little something to say, anyway, about this latest episode up on Green Street involving this FBI intelligence agent who allegedly, we underscore, was involved with a couple of Russian emigres, and they came up here and checked his credentials out through the Soviet Consulate, and you've got a vice consul over there who's an unindicted co-conspirator. So we asked Admiral Turner about it, and he said what he said.

I don't know, Admiral. The only thing I can figure out is that people here in San Francisco are scared of you. I figured our phones would jump off the hook here with people wanting to ask you stuff, but evidently they're not going to. And I don't want to keep you around if nobody has a question to ask. I think this is, you know, just the latest in a long series of incidents up here.

You say you lived not far from the consulate, Admiral? I didn't know that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, on the other end of Green Street, at 999, up on the top of Russian Hill.

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SPIVAK: Oh, you were looking down on them.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

SPIVAK: Oh. That's not easy to do.

All right. Well, anyway, Admiral, it's good to hear the sound of your voice -- oh, wait a minute. Now here comes -- I was just going to say goodbye to him, but evidently there's somebody around who has the temerity to want to ask Admiral Turner a question.

You're on KNBR with Admiral Turner.

MICHAEL: This is Michael calling from Berkeley. And I was just thinking about the comment that Admiral Turner mentioned earlier, that there's some kind of balance involved in the Russian personnel being able to observe some of the freedom that we have, and that that somewhat compensates for the frustration that we feel that they're intruding upon us.

My question is, wouldn't it seem that the more observant the Russians become and the more they're liberated in their imagination, so to speak, the more that their own people would be embarrassed and even frustrated by that, and send them home and prevent them from providing that kind of liberating influence on their own people?

SPIVAK: What about that, Admiral?

ADMIRAL TURNER: The Soviets certainly have a problem of constant defections because of people who come over here and learn to like our way of life. During my time in the CIA, their number two man in the United Nations, Ambassador Andrei Shevchenko, defected to our country. So they worry about that constantly.

Joel, you mentioned Washington, you used to live near the new Soviet Embassy.

SPIVAK: Yeah. It looks like Oz. It looks like the Emerald City up there.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But notice that that new embassy, which does look like a whole city of Oz, with a wall around it and big iron gates, that's not only their embassy, that's where all the Soviets are going to live. They'll lock them up in there, in effect, so they can keep their eye on them.

So your caller, Michael from Berkeley, is very astute. They certainly have a problem. They want to keep a diplomatic

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representation here. They want to keep a lot of people here in order to have KGB agents available to spy. But they do run the risk that they're going to have people who will go home disaffected or people who don't go home. And they try to take precautions against that by keeping very tight control of them, even in our society.

MICHAEL: I was going to say that it would seem that in terms of the mentality of the people who are working in this country, being aware that that's the kind of pressure they're going to get from their superiors, they would be sure not to exert any kind of liberating influence on their fellows or on anybody back home, that they would be very, very tigh-mouthed about what they've learned and appreciated about their experiences here.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Michael, I'm not predicting that these people are going to conduct a revolution in the Soviet Union quickly. But I think that over time, this erodes the credibility of the Soviet propaganda line back home and it builds up the dissident movement. Certainly, not every one of these people goes home and takes the dissidents' side of things, by no means at all. I agree with you. They're under tremendous pressure. But inside, these people will never be the same after they've been touched by our freedom.

SPIVAK: Michael, thanks for the call.

One more call, then Admiral Turner has to go.

ED: This is Ed from Brentwood. And I was just wondering if the Admiral was aware of anybody during the Carter Administration that defected to the Soviet Union from the United States, or if anything like that has ever taken place.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, that has taken place. There haven't been any in recent years. Back in the 1960s, we had a couple of civilian employees of the National Security Agency who did defect to the Soviet Union when we -- we, the FBI -- got onto their trail.

A couple of years later, we had a couple of Army sergeants at the same National Security Agency in Washington who committed suicide rather than defect to the Soviet Union.

There've been very few of those.

There's one famous CIA man who has not defected to the Soviet Union, but has virtually done something like that. His name is Philip Agee. He won't come back to the United States anymore because he's afraid we would arrest him. But he runs

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around Cuba and East Germany and places, saying and writing things against the CIA.

SPIVAK: You're being very kind, Admiral. What Agee really thinks is that somebody's going to kill him if he comes back here.

ADMIRAL TURNER: [Laughter] I won't comment on that.

SPIVAK: No, I'm sure you won't. But he's said that publicly, so I don't think that's any secret to anybody.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, that may be so.

SPIVAK: Does that answer your question, sir?

ED: Very well. Very well. Thank you very much.

SPIVAK: Well, I'm certainly pleased that Admiral Turner agreed to spend this time with us.

Admiral, it's good to talk to you again. And thanks, at least, for reassuring -- wait a minute, Admiral. Just one more thing. I think it's fair to say, is it not, that, sure, they're up there on Green Street listening, but it's also fair to say that somebody else is listening to them? Right?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I think we can say that everybody keeps pretty close track of what goes on.

SPIVAK: Yes. Well, that's what I just wanted to make sure everybody understood.

Admiral, have a good evening.

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