

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 1-AWASHINGTON TIMES  
4 May 1987

# Bureaucrats resist efforts to fight back against spies

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When a Romanian intelligence officer defected to the United States in 1978, U.S. officials said he made a startling disclosure: The wife of an American ambassador posted to an Eastern bloc capital had been seduced by an undercover operative posing as the ambassador's chauffeur.

According to the State Department, an investigation revealed the tryst had not compromised U.S. secrets. But to protect the ambassador, the department withheld all details of the affair from senior Reagan administration officials.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which confirmed the

ambassador for posts in 1981 and 1985, also was not informed.

"The files were sealed to prevent violating privacy laws," a State Department official said last week in confirming the affair. "People in this administration didn't even know about it."

During a 1985 confirmation hearing, the ambassador was asked a standard question about whether anything in his past might embarrass the United States, and he told the panel "no," according to congressional sources.

State Department handling of the incident has been cited by administration security officials as an example of the "systemic" bureaucratic opposition to counterespionage and security efforts stretching back for decades.

In the past, such "hardball tactics" by Soviet intelligence services were used to blackmail diplomats, military officials and journalists.

But State Department colleagues who defended the current ambassador to Chile, Harry G. Barnes Jr., regard his wife's indiscretion while he was ambassador to Romania as nothing more than "a personal tragedy" and not a security vulnerability, according to U.S. officials.

Bureaucratic resistance extends beyond individuals or agencies and is so strong that prospects for correcting the problem in government remain dim despite the current public outcry over the Marine security guard sex-and-espionage scandal that began unfolding in Moscow late last year, according to several administration security officials.

"The main problem is that, in government, there is a basic aversion to counterintelligence," said one offi-

cial. "It's the least popular yet the most difficult aspect of intelligence because you're dealing with the dark side of human nature — betrayal, revenge and lust."

During the past six years of the Reagan administration, which vowed in 1980 to rebuild U.S. counterintelligence capabilities, the State Department and its Foreign Service successfully resisted White House attempts to initiate counterespionage reforms, according to officials involved in the debate.

Another intelligence official said the recent security breakdowns and loss of national secrets in Moscow represent "the tip of the iceberg" in a governmentwide problem stemming from a weak counterintelligence capability and failure to improve it.

"This subject has been studied to death," the official said. "Yet realistic appraisals of [U.S. government] security vulnerabilities have been largely ignored."

The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, a group of experts from outside the administration, made more than 100 recommendations for improving counterintelligence in a 1985 report, the official said.

These included banning foreign nationals from working at U.S. embassies in the Soviet bloc, reducing the thousands of hostile spies operating in the United States, developing countermeasures against electronic espionage targeted at U.S. agencies and individuals, and preventing the loss of U.S. technological data, the official said.

Robert Lamb, the State Department's diplomatic security chief, said in a recent interview that past Foreign Service resistance to counterintelligence policies reflected a general distaste for secrecy and a suspicion about spying shared by American society as a whole.

"We live in a very open society, we

trust our neighbors and it is very difficult to transplant a person with this very typically American attitude into a place that is as very directly and systematically hostile, from an intelligence point of view, as the Soviet Union," Mr. Lamb said.

As a result of the Moscow embassy failures, the department has begun a review of its security program "from top to bottom," he said.

Security lapses at U.S. embassies have led to numerous sexual entrapment operations in communist countries and widespread electronic eavesdropping on embassy facilities, officials said.

Two Marine guards once posted in Moscow were charged earlier this year with allowing Soviet agents inside the most sensitive areas of the U.S. Embassy. The Marines apparently were seduced by female Soviet agents employed by the embassy.

Besides being the most important U.S. diplomatic outpost, the Moscow embassy serves as one of the most important U.S. intelligence collection facilities in the world, officials said.

Administration security officials, who agreed to discuss the issue on condition of anonymity, placed most blame on the White House for its failure to overcome bureaucratic opposition to strong counterespionage policies.

President Reagan, the officials said, delegated authority freely to Cabinet subordinates and frequently deferred to Secretary of State George Shultz on the issue of embassy security.

It was Mr. Shultz, according to the officials, who set the tone for State Department anti-security attitudes in 1985 by threatening to resign in protest against a National Security Council counterintelligence plan to require departmentwide lie-detector tests.

Last week, Ronald I. Spiers, undersecretary of state for manage-

ment, defended Mr. Shultz in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said Mr. Shultz has backed security reforms over the past several years.

As part of a counterterrorist security program set up in 1984, the State Department opened the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, expanded its recruitment of security officers and collaborated with U.S. intelligence agencies to counter electronic espionage, Mr. Spiers said.

He said the State Department "took steps to change the Foreign Service culture to increase the secu-

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rity sensitivity of our colleagues, many of whom felt security contradicted the traditional mission of the State Department, mainly to get out and make contacts and penetrate other cultures and societies."

But an administration intelligence official said Mr. Shultz opposed the 1983 counterintelligence operation that flushed out Soviet electronic "bugs" planted inside typewriters at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

"Sweepers" from the National Security Agency, the supersecret intelligence agency responsible for countering electronic spying, were dispatched to Moscow to ferret out the suspected typewriter bugs, the official said.

The NSA agents discovered tiny transmitters hidden inside IBM typewriters, including one in the embassy suite of then-Ambassador to Moscow Arthur Hartman, that were able to read the most sensitive, typewritten diplomatic messages.

Mr. Shultz reacted to the operation by complaining to the White House that the search "was like allowing foxes inside the henhouse," the official said.

White House intelligence officials then confronted Mr. Shultz, saying, "Wait a minute, isn't the KGB the fox and we're all the chickens?" the official said.