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KGB Defector Told U.S. of 'Spy Dust' Use

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WASHINGTON—A high-rank-
ing KGB defector's disclosure that
the Soviets were making repeated
use of potentially hazardous "spy
dust" to track the movement of
U.S. diplomats in Moscow led to the
State Department's unusual accu-
sation against the Soviets last
month, government sources said
Friday.

The warning by Vitaly Yurchen-
ko, who defected Aug. 1 while on a
temporary assignment in Italy, came
atop earlier indications that the
Soviets were using the chemical
sporadically and persuaded U.S.
officials to go public with the
accusation.

The sources said key information
obtained from Yurchenko by the
CIA and FBI, which are question-
ing him at an undisclosed site in the
United States, rank him as a

"much more important" defector
than Oleg A. Gordievski, the head
of the KGB's London operation
who defected to the British earlier
this month.

Yurchenko—whose name was
spelled Dzhurtchenko in initial re-
ports of his defection—served as
first secretary of the Soviet Em-
bassy in Washington from August,
1975, until late 1980, giving him
access to crucial details of KGB
operations in the United States.
The assignment also helps explain
why government sources have at-
tached such significance to his
defection.

"More will be unraveling in
months to come, and that's why
this is so sensitive," one source
said.

Yurchenko has told U.S. interro-
gators that Soviet intelligence has
"never" penetrated the State De-
partment, according to govern-
ment sources, who declined to be
identified by name or agency.

The sources said CIA officials
were disturbed that Yurchenko's

defection became public as quickly
as it did, saying that he had wanted
his action kept quiet because his
family remains in the Soviet Union.

In accusing the Soviets of using
the chemical nitrophenylpenta-
dial, or NPPD, to track the
movement of Americans in Mos-
cow, the State Department said it
had determined that the chemical
is a mutagen, or capable of altering
cells, and thus a potential cause of
cancer, though its precise effects
were not known.

The government sources said
Yurchenko had alerted the United
States that Soviet security police
were using increasing amounts of
NPPD and that this led to the
decision to make a public accu-
sation. The charge was made Aug. 21
in Moscow and Washington.

Afterward, a team of U.S. medi-
cal investigators traveled to Mos-
cow to study the Soviets' alleged
use of the chemical dust and assess
its potential for harm. In addition to
gathering samples, the study in-
cludes an effort to determine
whether NPPD can actually be
absorbed through the skin, and
thus pose a danger to health.

The team hopes to have devel-
oped solid information about the
chemical by next month.

Meanwhile, the Justice Depart-
ment and the CIA denied a New
York Times report that Yurchenko
had identified several CIA employ-
ees as Soviet agents.

"Yurchenko has not indicated
that there are any employees of the
CIA working as Soviet agents," the
Justice Department said in an un-
usual break from its practice of
making no comment on such re-
ports.

In addition, a government source
informed on intelligence matters
denied an Associated Press report
that quoted an unidentified con-
gressional source as saying that
Yurchenko had implicated several
former employees of the intelli-
gence agency.