

September 9, 1985.

SOVIET ESPIONAGE: USING THE U.N. AGAINST THE U.S.

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INTRODUCTION

With mounting concern, the West is discovering an escalating threat to its security posed by Soviet espionage. The U.S. government is prosecuting the Walker family on charges of giving military secrets to Moscow, while the West German government reels from revelations that some of its top security officials secretly have been working for East Germany. Ripples of this West German spy scandal already have reached Britain and Switzerland.

Dwarfing these as spy threats is a Kremlin-directed espionage center thriving inside the United States. At risk are, among other things, the secrets of U.S. weapons, strategic military planning, high technology, advanced manufacturing processes, industrial innovations, and biotech and biogenetic research breakthroughs. Espionage against these targets weakens not only U.S. military defenses, but undermines U.S. worldwide economic competitiveness.

What makes the U.S. particularly vulnerable to this espionage are the convenient cover and access enjoyed by the spies. They are diplomats and bureaucrats with a status even more privileged than diplomats. Not only do they operate out of Soviet bloc and Soviet client-state embassies to the U.S., but more important--and much more valuable to the Kremlin--they use as a base the diplomatic missions, agencies and secretariats affiliated with the United Nations, in the heart of Manhattan.

Their numbers run into the hundreds. At least one in three of all Soviet, East bloc and client-state diplomats posted to the United States engages in espionage. This is the confident consensus of U.S. intelligence experts. The term, espionage, covers a multitude of abuses of diplomatic privilege: information collection (by open and covert means, including electronic intercepts), acquisition of military and industrial technology (some of it purchased off-the-shelf, some of it stolen), recruitment and supervision of agents (some but by no means all of whom are U.S. nationals), and an array of "active measures" that involve, among others, propaganda, spreading "disinformation" and using front groups.

The estimate of one in three, in fact, appears quite conservative. It is based, The Heritage Foundation has learned from official U.S. sources, on the actual record of confirmed case histories. It probably would be much more accurate to conclude that one in two Soviet bloc and client-state diplomats is involved in espionage, warn Soviet and East bloc defectors, many of whom were KGB (Soviet State Security), GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence) or East bloc counterparts. This is confirmed by Arkady Shevchenko, former U.N. Under-Secretary General for Political and Security Council Affairs, one of the highest ranking Soviet officials ever to defect to the West. Shevchenko writes in Breaking With Moscow (published this year) that, of 28 Soviet bloc "international civil servants" in his especially sensitive unit in the U.N. Secretariat, at least 21 spent some or all of their duty hours on intelligence assignments, in New York and elsewhere, under KGB control.

These numbers constitute a formidable challenge to U.S. counterintelligence forces. The danger to U.S. national security is beyond question.

THE UNIQUE VALUE OF THE U.N.

There are two distinct parts to the diplomat-espionage problem. The first is inherent in the normal, reciprocal exchange of diplomats capital-to-capital (such as between Washington and Moscow) or major city-to-major city (such as between the consulates in Leningrad and San Francisco). The Soviets post several hundred diplomats to Washington; the U.S. posts a similar number to Moscow; each group is a mix, as both sides know perfectly well, of diplomats and intelligence agents. Even on this regular diplomatic level, however, the Soviets enjoy the advantage of supplementing their own staffs with East Germans, Bulgarians, Cubans, Afghans, and other Soviet bloc and client-state diplomats. Against key targets, they operate as a single, unified hierarchy, with the Soviet KGB at the top. By contrast, the U.S. maintains only loose, informal ties with the intelligence services of its Western allies, Israel, and a few other countries.

To make matters worse, the U.S. suffers from self-inflicted wounds in this diplomatic tradeoff. The total American diplomat and non-diplomat complement in Moscow is substantially smaller than the Soviet Mission in Washington: 202 vs. 495 (with 79 more Soviets currently en route). The Soviets, moreover, hire almost no local, American employees for the non-professional positions at their Washington embassy, but bring to the U.S. Soviet citizens to serve as embassy caretakers, mechanics, drivers and the like. The U.S., distressingly, uses mostly Soviet nationals for these jobs in Moscow. The result: 224 Soviet citizens, under the direct control of their government, now work inside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. It is no wonder that the KGB was able to dust U.S. Embassy telephones, chairs, auto seats and other objects with carcinogenic nitrophenylpentadienal powder to track the movements of U.S. diplomats in Moscow.

The second part of the diplomat-espionage problem is even more serious. It is the unique circumstance of the U.S. serving as host country to United Nations headquarters in New York City. Here, of course, there is no tradeoff or reciprocity. All the risk is borne by the U.S., for the U.S.S.R. hosts no United Nations--or other truly international--body. For the Soviet bloc and its clients, "diplomatic" presence at and because of the U.N. is pure espionage gravy.

At the U.N., there are official missions of the Soviet Union, its satellites and clients (plus the observer missions of such non-U.N. members as North Korea, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the South West Africa People's Organization). Alongside the official U.N. missions is the U.N. itself--the huge Secretariat, plus headquarters of the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) and UNICEF (the U.N. Children's Fund). Employment totals more than 15,000, of whom 371 are from the Soviet Union, plus another 225 from the East bloc and the client states. As with Soviet bloc diplomatic personnel, these U.N. employees are a mix of genuine benign bureaucrats and intelligence agents.

Taken together, these components define the parameters of the problem posed by the U.N. as a "sanctuary for spies" in the U.S. It is a problem that the U.S. imposes on itself, for no one forces it to play host to the United Nations.

THE NUMBERS

To present the situation in the most cautious way, the number of Soviet-related diplomat-spies is calculated to underestimate the magnitude of the problem. As such, Albania, the People's Republic of China and Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia) are not counted. Albania maintains nearly complete isolation from the Soviets and the Soviet world generally; China cannot be considered part of any Soviet-led bloc (although its U.N. Mission and Secretariat personnel in New York may pose a security threat of another kind); and Democratic Kampuchea is still represented

at the U.N. by a coalition of opposition forces, partly anti-Communist and wholly anti-Soviet. Iran also is excluded, even though its ties to the international terrorist network pose a clear security threat to the U.S.

Adding together all Soviet bloc and client-state nationals who are on the staffs of their countries' missions to the U.N. or who work for the U.N., the total comes to 1,204 potential agents of espionage in the U.S. because of the U.N. (see Table)

SOVIET AND BLOC NATIONALS IN NEW YORK

	<u>Dips.</u>	<u>Support Staff</u>	<u>U.N. Sec't.</u>	<u>UNDP</u>	<u>UNICEF</u>
Afghanistan.....	4	6	16	5	1
Bulgaria.....	11	12	14	approx.	total*
Cuba.....	35	21	26	1	2
Czechoslovakia.....	12	9	17	approx.	total*
German Dem. Republic.....	13	13	13	approx.	total*
Hungary.....	11	9	15	approx.	total*
Libya**.....	10	16	9	0	0
Mongolia.....	5	1	0	0	0
Nicaragua.....	17	0	6	approx.	total*
North Korea.....	0	20	0	0	0
PLO.....	0	7	25	0	0
Poland.....	10	9	40	approx.	total*
Romania.....	7	5	10	approx.	total*
USSR.....	117	178	331	1	1
(Byelorussia).....	9	5	11	0	0
(Ukraine).....	10	8	27	0	0
Vietnam.....	15	11	15	1	1
	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS.....	286	330	575	8	5

GRAND TOTAL.....1,204.....

* No breakdown by agency is available for these countries. The total also has been adjusted for a few U.N. employees located other than in NYC.

** Libyan nationals in New York, uniquely, are restricted to the five boroughs of the city.

SOURCES: All data from lists maintained by the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Diplomatic and support lists as of June 30, 1985; U.N. data as of mid- to late-1984.

Still the total is too low. Most of these "diplomats" and "international civil servants" are accompanied by spouses and/or adult dependents. On the basis of confirmed case histories, U.S. intelligence experts believe that they too undertake espionage assignments of various kinds. Supporting this assessment are

defector reports. Assuming conservatively only one spouse or adult dependent for each mission official or U.N. employee, the total doubles to some 2,408 potential security threats to the U.S.

Using the one-in-three estimate, the number of actual agents that can be used by Moscow totals about 800. Using the one-in-two ratio urged by Soviet defectors, the number of actual agents is about 1,200. Even those diplomats and U.N. bureaucrats who engage in no espionage cause problems for the U.S., for the very fact that they are on tap complicates the U.S. counterintelligence challenge greatly.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

All of the experts consulted, from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, agree that effective countermeasures against the enormous threat posed by 800 to 1,200 espionage operatives must proceed along two parallel and complementary tracks: 1) every reasonable means must be used to limit the numbers of potential Soviet-related espionage agents in the U.S. and to limit their freedom of operation; 2) U.S. counterintelligence resources must be enhanced substantially.

Limiting Soviet U.N.-Related Espionage

For almost 40 years, the U.S. Government has had all the authority it needs to crack down on the U.N.-related Soviet threat to national security. P.L. 357, enacted in 1947, clarified the Headquarters Agreement of November 21, 1947, which governs the U.S.-U.N. host country relationship. In section 6, this law states that "nothing in the Agreement shall be construed as in any way diminishing, abridging or weakening the right of the United States to safeguard its own security" and in particular "completely to control the entrance of aliens into any territory of the United States other than the (U.N.) headquarters district and its immediate vicinity."

Under this authority, the U.S. restricts the freedom of movement of Soviet and some bloc diplomats at U.N. missions to an area of 25 miles from the U.N.'s New York headquarters. To do the work that legitimately brings them to the U.S., this is all the freedom they need. In 1982, in the Foreign Missions Act, Congress set up administrative machinery within the State Department in an effort to make these travel restrictions tighter.

Although the 1947 Act makes absolutely no distinction between diplomats and any other class of "aliens," no restrictions ever have been imposed on U.N. bureaucrats. As a result, in this year's State Department Authorization Act, Congress made its intent clear beyond any doubt or administrative fudging. The

Roth-Hyde Amendment, named for its principal co-sponsors, Senator William V. Roth, Jr. (R-Delaware) and Representative Henry J. Hyde (R-Illinois), extends to all foreign nationals at the U.N. the restrictions that now or may in the future apply to their countries' U.N. missions. There is to be no more free ride for those "international civil servants" who are known to report routinely to their U.N. missions, to receive orders from their governments, and even to kick back part of their U.N. paychecks.

The mandate of Congress is unequivocal. Effective follow-up action by the State Department and the U.S. Mission to the U.N.--even by the U.N. itself--is now called for, in the following directions:

1) The Roth-Hyde Amendment went into effect last week; it should be vigorously enforced. There is no law or international convention, nor any U.S. host country obligation, that allows U.S. "guests" to break American laws or threaten U.S. national security. The most effective enforcement of the Amendment would be to require prior notification by the U.N. Secretary General of all official U.N. travel (which would alert U.S. counterintelligence agencies to potential security threats and enable them to deny permission in some cases). Further, U.N. employees who are citizens of countries under restriction should be required to request permission for "private" travel. Such unofficial travel should almost always be denied.

2) The list restricting travel should be expanded. None of the East European Soviet satellites is now on the restricted list. Yet their diplomats and nationals at the U.N. pose an obvious and serious security threat to the U.S. The same is true for Nicaragua. The status of the People's Republic of China is ambiguous. Its New York-based diplomats already enjoy special privileges: they are free of all travel restrictions to 29 "open cities" embracing virtually every major metropolitan area in the U.S. This would not be curtailed by the Roth-Hyde Amendment. Although China is no Soviet satellite, official U.S. sources confide that Beijing's agents in the U.S. are deeply engaged in industrial espionage.

3) The size of some U.N. missions should be reduced. The Soviet Mission to the U.N. totals 295--when Byelorussia and the Ukraine are added, the total is 327. By contrast, the U.S. Mission to the U.N. gets by with about one-third this number. Surely, Moscow is taking advantage of the U.S. in its role as host country. Similarly, Cuba has a staff of 56 at its U.N. mission, about the same size as major West European nations whose involvement in U.N. official business is generally much heavier than Havana's. The matter has run out of control. The State Department immediately should define "reasonable ranges" for mission size, based on such generally accepted U.N. criteria as a country's population and wealth, and the scale of assessed contributions to the U.N. budget. This would force a cut back

mainly in Soviet bloc missions and thus reduce the number of potential spies.

4) The U.S. should stop subsidizing espionage against the U.S. The U.S. currently pays 25 percent of the salaries of U.N. employees. This includes, of course, those who receive and submit to instructions from their governments (including instructions to spy). This is in clear violation of Article 100 of the U.N. Charter. Another related Charter abuse that the U.S. tolerates is "secondment," by which the Soviets assign their nationals to the Secretariat on contract and replace them at will. This puts an effective lock on certain key positions--in personnel, public information and Political and Security Council Affairs, for example, whose chief always is a Soviet national--and enables the Soviets to establish permanent espionage outposts within the U.N. Secretariat. The U.S. should demand that the Secretary General put an end to these Charter violations. Failing prompt, effective action, the U.S. should withhold the appropriate portion of its annual assessment.

Increasing U.S. Counterintelligence Resources

Even without the U.N.-related security threat, strengthening U.S. counterintelligence capabilities is an urgent priority for the FBI, CIA and other law enforcement agencies. The espionage charges against the Walker family make this clear. U.S. counterintelligence must be rebuilt after its systematic destruction during the 1970s. It is a long and slow process. Of all intelligence specialties, none is more demanding or dependent on experience than counterintelligence. Since 1981, the U.S. has begun to rebuild; more must be done. Such as:

1) FBI counterintelligence forces in New York should be increased substantially. More FBI agents are urgently required in New York City to monitor potential espionage activities related to the U.N. The U.S. is now in the first year of a five-year FBI expansion program, which will increase the FBI counterintelligence force by about 50 percent nationwide. Exactly how many agents the FBI needs, and how many should be posted in New York, is classified information. The President, the Attorney General and the Congress--the two Intelligence Committees in particular--have the obligation to assure themselves and the American people that the U.S. is spending what it must to rebuild a counterintelligence capability fully in line with the Soviet threat, including the U.N.-related part of the threat--and on the fastest possible track.

2) Adequate support staff and services should be provided. More agents alone will not get the job done. Required, too, are telecommunications equipment, data banks, stenotypists, and surveillance and other specialists. The simple lack of an adequate motor pool, for example, can abort an entire U.S. counterintelligence operation. In addition, collaboration among all American

law enforcement and intelligence agencies is essential. Currently in New York, cooperation is excellent among the FBI, U.S. Mission security staff and the superb New York City Police counterintelligence forces. The President and Congress must ensure the same high level of teamwork within the U.S. intelligence community, particularly between the CIA and the FBI. Almost by definition, Soviet-directed espionage at the U.N. is a cross-border matter, justifying CIA involvement.

3) Counterintelligence laws and guidelines should be reviewed. A key element of the systematic attack of the 1970s on U.S. intelligence capabilities was the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1974 (FISA). This was supplemented by Department of Justice guidelines. Most U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials say that neither FISA (which established a special U.S. court to pass on the legality of wiretaps) nor the Justice Department guidelines seriously inhibit effective counterintelligence operations. Yet outside experts and former counterintelligence agents insist that FISA and the guidelines have a "chilling effect." Among other things, they discourage agents from even requesting especially sensitive surveillance efforts. Thus, while the special court almost always says "yes" to requests, it does so in part because it never gets the really tough ones. The President, the Attorney General and Congress must review the law and guidelines for just such crippling defects.

4) The U.S. presence within the U.N. Secretariat should be strengthened. Increased presence within the U.N. Secretariat of tough-minded, fully qualified U.S. professionals could inhibit the activities of Soviet bloc spies. Americans inside the Secretariat, moreover, could monitor the situation better than any outside agents. They could spot suspicious behavior--sometimes nothing more than a Bulgarian or Russian who almost never turns up in the office. And they could report their observations to appropriate U.S. officials without compromising their roles as legitimate international civil servants.

THE "UNIVERSAL" SOLUTION

Another way to bring potential Soviet agents at the U.N. under more effective control would be to break up the routine, predictable pattern of the U.N. operation. A useful first step would be to keep moving the annual three-month session of the U.N. General Assembly; one year it could convene in Moscow, the next in Geneva, following that in Nairobi, and so on. This was proposed in 1981 by former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and endorsed in principle by President Reagan. By rotating the U.N. venue, the bulk of the U.N. missions and the massive U.N. bureaucracy would be operating outside New York and the U.S. for at least three months annually. The U.N. sanctuary for espionage targeted against the U.S. would be severely disrupted.

If all else fails, then the U.S. must protect itself against U.N.-based espionage by pressing for the ultimate option: moving the U.N. out of the U.S. altogether and inviting the organization to find a new home elsewhere. From the perspective of U.S. national security, it makes a great deal of sense.

The State Department and its supportive "establishment" would, of course, argue that by such an act the U.S. would be turning its back on its worldwide responsibilities. In Moscow or Geneva or Nairobi, however, as in New York, the U.S. would be able to play whatever role it wished to play in the U.N., which might even become more serious and businesslike.

CONCLUSION

All of the above recommendations are mutually reinforcing. If all were pursued, the security threat posed by the privileged sanctuary for spies provided by the U.N. could be brought under effective control.

Restrictions on Soviet and bloc diplomats' freedom to move at will within the U.S., now extended by the Roth-Hyde Amendment to Soviet bloc U.N. bureaucrats, should be rigorously enforced; the list of countries under restriction should be expanded to include the entire East European bloc; suspiciously overstaffed U.N. missions should be cut back; and the U.S. should stop paying its 25 percent share of the salaries of U.N. employees who clearly are under the control of their governments. These actions would begin to reduce the number of potential spies to manageable proportions.

The problem can be managed, moreover, by increased U.S. counterintelligence resources, adequately supported by staff and services, further backed up by a strong U.S. presence inside the U.N. secretariat and rid of unnecessary restraints on their operational freedom.

If the U.S. is really serious about turning back the U.N.-related Soviet threat to its national security, an arsenal of varied and effective weapons is at hand.