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de Vosjoli, Philippe Thyraud

Soc. 4.01.2 Topaz

Ex-Aide Asserts de Gaulle Suppressed Data on Spies

A former French intelligence officer, who is living in the United States because he fears arrest if he returns to France, has accused President de Gaulle of discounting a warning from President Kennedy that Soviet agents had penetrated French security at the uppermost levels.

The former intelligence man, Philippe Thyraud de Vosjoli, whose exploits are said to have formed the basis for Leon Uris's best-selling spy novel "Topaz," said information about Soviet espionage in France had been provided by a Soviet defector in 1961.

The defector, code-named Martel, is described by Mr. de Vosjoli, whose memoirs will appear in the issue of Life magazine on sale tomorrow, as a man with an "all but encyclopedic knowledge of the secret workings of the French intelligence service."

Following the news last weekend of the imminent publication of Mr. de Vosjoli's memoirs, President de Gaulle's office dismissed allegations of Soviet infiltration of high government circles as completely ridiculous and grotesque.

In addition to the memoirs of Mr. de Vosjoli, the Life issue also carries an article by John Barry of the Sunday Times of London, who spent three months in an investigation of the Martel affair.

Mr. Barry credits Martel with helping to flush out such spies as H. A. R. Philby, the British intelligence officer who eventually fled to the Soviet Union; Col. Stig Wennerstrom, of the Swedish Defense Ministry; William John Christopher Vassall, a British Admiralty clerk who confessed to spying for the Soviet Union; and a United States Army sergeant, Jack E. Dunlap, who killed himself after he was interrogated.

According to Mr. de Vosjoli, Martel indicated that:

"Soviet agents had penetrated the French element of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Ministry.

"Someone who 'appeared' to be a member of the Cabinet had been identified as a Soviet agent discussions within the State Security Committee (R.G.B.) in the Soviet intelligence service.

"A network with the code name Sapphire, consisting of more than half a dozen French intelligence officers, all of whom had been recruited by the K.G.B., was operating" within the French intelligence organization.

"Within the French intelligence community, an apparatus was being established to ferret out American nuclear and scientific advances, 'eventually in the Soviet interest.'"

Mr. de Vosjoli wrote:

"One of his early and most disturbing assertions was that French K.G.B. agents in NATO headquarters in Paris were so strategically placed and so facile in their methods that they could produce on two or three days' demand any NATO document Moscow asked for."

Kennedy Took Steps

Mr. de Vosjoli said that President Kennedy had taken extraordinary steps—employing a personal courier with a personal letter—to warn President de Gaulle of the Soviet penetration, and that Mr. Kennedy had offered cooperation in any effort by the French to corroborate the intelligence for themselves.

According to Mr. de Vosjoli, President de Gaulle dispatched Gen. Jean-Louis de Rougemont, the French intelligence chief, to the United States to interrogate Martel. After a few days, Mr. de Vosjoli wrote, General de Rougemont was "shaken by the appallingly detailed information the man had on the innermost workings of the French Government and its security and intelligence systems."

Mr. de Vosjoli implies that several factors, including possibly the influence of the Cabinet officer close to President de Gaulle, whose presence was indicated by Martel, accounted for French inaction in the face of the defectors' disclosures.

In addition to "possibly sinister forces," Mr. de Vosjoli cites General de Gaulle's feeling that he had been misled by Mr. de Vosjoli's reports on Soviet missile activity in Cuba in 1962 into supporting the United States against the Soviet Union during the crisis late that year; and the French leader's pique at his exclusion from a meeting between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in Nassau on Dec. 21, 1962.

It was Mr. de Vosjoli who went to Cuba during the summer of 1962 to try to confirm the presence of Soviet offensive missiles.

Gave Data to C.I.A.

Mr. de Vosjoli said he received persuasive reports that there were, indeed, offensive missiles in Cuba and had passed this information along to the Central Intelligence Agency.

He said that, in the autumn of 1962, he asked Gen. Paul Jacquier, a French intelligence official, to account for inaction in response to the Martel disclosures and was told "that the Government could not stand a scandal at the time, with the nation still just getting over the giving up of Algeria."

Later, Mr. de Vosjoli said, his superiors accused him of having been duped by the United States into believing that the Soviet missiles in Cuba were offensive.

In December, 1962, he wrote, he was summoned to Paris and told by General Jacquier that France no longer regarded the United States as an ally and friend. The next day, he said, he was instructed to assist in the collection of intelligence about the United States deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles when he returned to the United States.

Despite his protest that such intelligence would be of use only to the Soviet Union, he was ordered to carry them out.

In August, 1963, Georges Paques, the French press chief of the Atlantic alliance, was arrested in Paris as a spy, but Mr. de Vosjoli said he was convinced that Mr. Paques was not alone.

Mr. de Vosjoli resigned Oct. 18, 1963, having served in the United States since 1951. He is said to have been warned by friends not to return to France.