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# Kohl leads probe of 'catastrophic' spy crisis in Bonn

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GENEVA, Switzerland — Calling the defection of one of West Germany's top counterintelligence officers "catastrophic," Chancellor Helmut Kohl returned to Bonn yesterday to personally take charge of a full-scale review of the country's security services.

Hans Neusel, a state secretary in the Interior Ministry and the government's chief spokesman in the affair, said immediate steps have been taken to safeguard West German agents in the East whose lives may be in jeopardy.

Officials in Bonn say countermeasures must be based on the assumption that Hans-Joachim Tiedge's flight to Communist East Germany had betrayed the identities of many West German agents operating in East Germany and compromised the surveillance of East German and Soviet spies in West Germany.

The espionage scandal broadened when federal investigators confirmed a secretary in the office of West German President Richard von Weizsaecker was arrested Saturday night.

According to information obtained by the German Press Agency, the unidentified

woman was arrested on suspicion of spying for East Germany; she had been under observation for some time.

West German authorities, reeling under recent apparent and confirmed defections to East Germany, "struck swiftly this time," the German Press Agency was told.

The woman's home was searched, but it was not known whether incriminating evidence was uncovered. The woman was arrested, federal investigators said, when she "stood out" in a check of personnel records.

A spokesman in Karlsruhe said the woman was not President von Weizsaecker's private secretary, but he gave no further details.

Three other Bonn secretaries were expected to be arrested in the next few days, according to "Der Koelner Express," a Cologne daily.

To repair the damage caused by the defection last week to East Germany of their top counterintelligence officer, West German officials have demanded the resignation of his former boss.

Herbert Hellenbroich, President of the Federal Intelligence Service, the agency responsible for intelligence-gathering activities abroad, will be asked to step down

in the coming week, officials told the Sunday newspaper "Bild am Sonntag."

West German Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann told the newspaper he was "outraged" that Mr. Hellenbroich had not informed him what a security risk Mr. Tiedge had become. Mr. Hellenbroich, a 48-year-old former classmate of Mr. Tiedge who was promoted to head the BND this month, denied any wrongdoing.

"I warned Tiedge several times to stop his drinking," Mr. Hellenbroich said. "But I couldn't transfer such a weak-charactered man from such a sensitive position, since it would have put him in danger of doing something impulsive such as going over to the East."

"I'm standing by what I did," the paper quoted him as saying. "Had I to do it again, I would have done the same. I will not offer my resignation."

Chancellor Kohl, who returned to the capital following a one-day meeting in France with President Francois Mitterrand, called Mr. Tiedge's defection "catastrophic."

Franz Joseph Strauss, the Bavarian chancellor and former federal minister of defense, said Mr. Tiedge's treachery and the disappearance of three others, two of them secretaries in key posts in Bonn, were probably linked.

West German officials said Mr. Tiedge, 48, was the No. 3 man in the

Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BVF), the agency responsible for directing intelligence operations against communist agents in West Germany.

Mr. Tiedge worked for the BVF for 19 years and is said to have had access to information on Western

agents, including Americans, in the East.

Some of those agents have been hastily withdrawn for fear of exposure, according to unconfirmed reports.

"If Tiedge passes on all his knowledge to the opponent secret services," Mr. Neusel told reporters in Bonn, "this will mean massive damage to West Germany's intelligence work."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Anita Stockman said that "there will be a damage assessment among our NATO allies." Spokesman Charles Redman said earlier that Washington would consult with Bonn to "determine what damage might ultimately have been done to our interests."

Sources in the United States familiar with intelligence work yesterday said Mr. Tiedge's apparent defection would be roughly equivalent to the head of counterintelligence for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation going to work for the Soviets.

Such a penetration, they said, would make it easier for the Soviets to create and maintain a spy network here, but have relatively little impact on intelligence-sharing from NATO or on U.S. agents abroad.

They said the impact of Mr. Tiedge's switch will largely depend on two factors: how long he has worked for East Germany, and how tightly the West Germans have "compartmentalized" their intelligence system. Given the number of spy cases in Bonn in the past, they said it is likely West German intelligence operations are strictly compartmentalized, with its officers informed only on a "need-to-know" basis.

Mr. Tiedge disappeared early last week amid indications of a growing spy scandal in Bonn.

Three weeks ago, Sonja Lueneburg, a secretary to Econom-

ics Minister Martin Bangemann, was reported missing. She is now believed to be in East Germany.

Miss Lueneburg's disappearance was followed by that of Ursula Rich-

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ter, a longtime official in an East European exile organization in Bonn.

Miss Richter vanished along with a male friend, Lorenz Betzing, a West German army messenger.

Previously, Mr. Betzing has been assigned to a top-secret government bunker near Bonn that was designed to serve as a command post in the event of nuclear war.

They, too, are thought to have fled to East Germany.

So far, there is no hard evidence to prove that Mr. Tiedge's defection is linked to the disappearances of the other three, but the circumstantial evidence is compelling.

Mr. Neusel revealed that Mr. Tiedge had been in charge of the search for Miss Richter, and it is now widely believed that he tipped her off to her impending arrest by security officials.

Miss Richter is suspected of having been the control officer for a number of East German agents operating in Bonn.

The four defections in the past three weeks appear to be the latest coup for the Russian-born head of East Germany's espionage apparatus, Gen. Marcus Wolff.

According to intelligence sources, it was Gen. Wolff who introduced the idea that Bonn's hundreds of lonely, unmarried secretaries, living in one-room apartments in West Germany's rather boring capital, could be useful agents if they were seduced by attractive male suitors, provided, of course, by the obliging East Germans.

Several years ago, an East German defector estimated that more than 50,000 communist agents were operating inside West Germany. Of that number, 3,000, many of them women, were working in Bonn.

A source in Washington yesterday said that Gen. Wolff, who has spent roughly two decades directing East

German intelligence efforts, makes a fictional spymaster portrayed by author John le Carre "look like a rank amateur."

Rather than work for quick results, Gen. Wolff "plays for the long haul," the source said.

Detailing how the East German intelligence chief recruits secretaries, the source, who is familiar with intelligence operations in Germany, said that when a highly placed secretary in Bonn breaks up with her boyfriend, within a matter of weeks she is likely to meet an extremely handsome single man who happens to share her main interest, be it music, skiing, or anything else.

Among dozens of secretary-spies previously uncovered, one of the most prominent was Leonore Suetterlin, who worked in the Foreign Ministry.

She was lured into espionage by a Soviet KGB agent posing as a photographer. Before marrying her and recruiting her into the KGB, he sent her huge bouquets of roses for months on end.

Miss Suetterlin committed suicide after being sentenced for treason.

While the nature of the relationship, if any, between Mr. Tiedge and the three others remains shrouded in mystery, Mr. Tiedge's lifestyle and personal problems are, and have been for some time, an open book.

After the death of his wife in an automobile accident three years ago, Mr. Tiedge's life began to unravel under the burden of huge gambling debts, an obvious and growing drinking problem and the difficulties of raising three teen-age daughters.

His neighbors in Cologne, sister city to Bonn, became irritated by the boisterous all-night parties he held, and on many occasions reported the disturbances to the police.

The morning after one such recent affair, his housekeeper told federal authorities that she found documents stamped "top secret"

scattered around Mr. Tiedge's apartment.

Indeed, the Frankfurter Allgemeine reported that when security officers entered Mr. Tiedge's apartment last Thursday they "discovered hidden away in various places top-secret papers, many of them in English, but they were not certain if he took copies with him to the East."

Despite evidence of serious problems in the life of one of its senior counter-intelligence officers, West German authorities did nothing.

The circumstances surrounding the Tiedge defection have ignited a firestorm of criticism in the West German press.

In an editorial entitled "A top man with a classical weakness," Munich's *Suddeutsche Zeitung* asked: "How is it possible, after what was known about [Mr. Tiedge], that no action was taken? There was more than enough reason to remove this man from his position, yet nothing was done."

*Die Welt* was even more incredulous. "The circumstances in [Mr. Tiedge's] life are the best possible situation in which spies are recruited," the newspaper remarked.

"Even after a careful examination of all his personal predicaments, it was decided not to transfer him" to less sensitive position, *Die Welt* said.

"This decision was made even though the government knew about the complaints that Tiedge often didn't take care of the top-secret documents entrusted to him.

"In one case, he even forgot sensitive documents when he was traveling in Belgium, and they had to be flown back to Bonn by special messenger," the newspaper said.

Not everyone believes that he was a longtime agent for the communists, however.

The *Suddeutsche Zeitung* agrees with the government that Mr. Tiedge's flight was "precipitate, the action of a man with severe emotional problems."

He was, the paper said in an edi-

torial, "a troubled man who acted on the spur of the moment."

*Die Welt* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* adopted a decidedly dimmer view, calling the defector an "agent in place for many years." Both newspapers have demanded sweeping reforms in the security arrangements of the intelligence services.

Mr. Zimmermann has been summoned to appear before Parliament's security control committee tomorrow to deliver an assessment of the scandal and its implications.

Opposition Social Democrat leader Hans-Jochen Vogel warned in yesterday's edition of *Bild am Sonntag* that the government could expect some tough questioning in Parliament.

"Demands for resignations could well be made when we have been briefed on the facts," he said.

Whatever he was — a cynical professional, or a desperate man with insoluble problems — Mr. Tiedge's defection may serve to deflect some of the danger of a major political crisis for Mr. Kohl's conservative coalition government.

The reason, most observers say, is that spy scandals have become a fact of life in West Germany in the past 40 years, and no government, left or right, has been immune to them.

In 1974, for example, Chancellor Willy Brandt was forced to resign after one of his closest advisers, Gunter Guillaume, was discovered to be a colonel in the East German intelligence service, which is part of the Soviet KGB apparatus. Col. Guillaume had held access to top-secret documents of the Bonn government many of which he had passed on to East Germany and then to Moscow.

At the moment, West German officials are trying to determine whether Mr. Tiedge was working for the East Germans during his entire time at the BVE, or if he only recently was recruited.

*Washington Times* staff writer Jay Mallin, in Washington, contributed to this article, which is based in part on wire-service reports.