

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE D-1

WASHINGTON TIMES  
25 September 1985

**THE  
MISSING  
LINK  
LINK**

Continued

## RALPH DE TOLEDANO

**I**n the murky world of espionage and counterespionage, little facts put together add up to major discoveries.

During the Korean War, a friend who had served in counterintelligence during World War II was able to work out the U.S.-Republic of Korea order of battle simply by linking seemingly unimportant bits of information carried in the newspapers. Today no one seems to care.

I cite as Exhibit A the visible turmoil in KGB operations in Europe. The defections of the last month and a half should have told the U.S. media that something of great importance was taking place. But the defections have been reported as if each of those events was independent of the others.

Let me join the pieces.

• Item: Hans Joachim Tiedge, a senior West German counterintelligence official, for no apparent reason suddenly picked up his marbles and skedaddled to East Germany. Until then, no one had suspected him.

• Item: Oleg Gordievski, a KGB agent who for 10 years had been supplying information to NATO counterintelligence, as suddenly surfaced in Britain, with no explanation as to the timing. Why?

• Item: Herbert Willner, an important official of West Germany's Free Democratic Party with political ties at the highest level — entrusted with monitoring Soviet espionage activities — and his wife, Herta-Astrid, a secretary in the office of Chancellor Helmut Kohl with access to highly classified military information, broke off a vacation in Spain. They turned up in East Berlin where Mr. Willner stated publicly that he had defected because he feared criminal prosecution for breaches of security. No one had suspected that the Willners were Soviet spies.

• Item: The NATO intelligence community has been noting restiveness in its KGB counterpart and has suspected that more than a few KGB operatives were being recalled to Moscow.

A tyro in espionage matters, adding it up, would have known that somewhere a bomb had gone off and that the KGB was running for cover. It takes years to "develop" an agent and set him "in place." What inspired

important KGB agents to blow their cover by fleeing eastward? Could it all be a coincidence? Obviously, there had to be a very compelling reason for the events of the past weeks.

And there was. That reason is named Vitaly Dzhurtchenko or Jurtschenko — choose your own transliteration of the Cyrillic — the No. 5 man in the KGB. He holds in his head the identities of scores of Soviet agents in Europe and of the additional thousands of "sleepers" — not to mention those witting and unwitting individuals whose job it is to spread disinformation and confusion in the West.

Only Gen. Walter Krivitsky, head of Soviet intelligence in Western Europe during the late 1930s — the man who stole the text of the Axis pact from the Nazi Foreign Ministry in Berlin — may have known as much then as Mr. Dzhurtchenko knows today — and Gen. Krivitsky was "suicided" in a Washington hotel

room after he defected to the West. Others who have broken with the Kremlin since knew only a fraction of what Gen. Krivitsky carried to his grave.

Vitaly Dzhurtchenko defected in Rome on July 24 — something the media in this country seems determined not to report. His defection has created shock waves in the KGB, and the tremors reach up to Comrade-dictator Mikhail Gorbachev. This fact ties together the defections of Mr. Tiedge and the Willners, the surfacing of Mr.

Gordievski, and the movement of KGB agents back to their home

base.

It is my information that Vitaly Dzhurtchenko is now in CIA hands, transferring his encyclopedic knowledge of KGB identities and operations to a computer. But even if he just fell into the Tiber and was washed out to sea, he presents the KGB problems of crisis proportions. For the KGB is forced to assume that he is spilling his guts — which means that it must suspend operations.

**T**he KGB must pull in its effectives and begin the long and difficult task of building a new apparatus. Other agents, you may be sure, will defect to the East, fearful that if they remain in place they will be apprehended.

Vitaly has sneezed mightily, for which we can say, "Gesundheit!"

*Ralph de Toledano is a nationally syndicated columnist.*