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Who's Accountable for Embassy Spying?

By BERNARD McMAHON

When are we going to wake up and stop the Soviets from spying on us in our own embassy in Moscow?

By diplomatic protocol, our embassy is sovereign territory. Yet we suffer the outrage of Soviet violations again and again; we have consistently been the mouse to the Soviet cat. The Soviets have planted a listening device in the seal of the United States behind the ambassador's desk, bombarded the building with electromagnetic carrier waves, tunneled into the basement and built an elaborate eavesdropping antenna in the embassy chimney, stolen the embassy typewriters and rigged them to transmit every letter, powdered our employees with traceable "yellow" dust, infiltrated KGB officers onto the embassy staff and engineered and built the new embassy building from the ground up as a marvel of technical espionage.

It is not that we have been taken by surprise by these Soviet violations: We have known for years that the embassy is No. 1 on the KGB target list. We have our own espionage techniques, and have long rec-

ognized the vulnerability of the building and people located in the center of Moscow.

Security personnel from the State Department, the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies affected have done surveys, analyses and investigations. They have written detailed instructions and tried to implement a host of defensive procedures.

Despite this, their rule requiring a continuous chain of custody over new electronics equipment was broken. The rule against Soviet access to sensitive areas in the new building was broken. The rule against fraternization with Soviet citizens was flagrantly broken by officially sanctioned parties where female KGB officers mixed with young single Marines inside the embassy compound.

What's the problem? Simply put, it is a pervasive irresponsibility on the part of our diplomatic community in Moscow—irresponsibility derived from the overall failure of our government to hold those in authority accountable for the loss of information that is vital to our national security.

For example, the State Department still scoffs at the "threat" posed by Soviet citizens working on embassy telephone switchboards, in the car pool, as maids, receptionists and clerks. From the ambassador on down, the view is that we know that the Soviets spy on us, but not to worry, we just won't say anything classified.

Intelligence professionals are appalled by this attitude. They know how valuable every random bit of information is. They know how valuable personal data are for recruiting spies. They know how small pieces fit into a larger mosaic. At the direction of Congress, Soviet citizens are now out of the embassy. But who knows what they took with them or what they left behind?

If convicted, Marine Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree and Cpl. Arnold Bracey must answer for their breaches of faith, and rightly so. But the tragedy, and the heart of the problem, is that they alone will stand accountable. What about the regional security officer for whom they worked? Who let the typewriters go astray? Who allowed the Soviets to electronically capture our new embassy? What about the other embassy employees who regularly attended dance nights in the embassy with Lonetree and Bracey? What about Ambassador Arthur Hartman himself?

If thousands of dollars in cash rather than millions of dollars in intelligence had been stolen, accountability would be clear and justice swift. Why are not those in authority held equally accountable for our national secrets?

Until they are, indifference will persist, security will suffer, and next week or next year we will read once again about the latest Soviet espionage triumph.

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