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U.S. Marine Guards Leading Lonely, Isolated Life in Soviet

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MOSCOW, March 28 — A United States Embassy guard, shaken by reports that two of his fellow marines helped Soviet agents infiltrate the embassy last year, turned to a diplomat on Friday and said, "Everyone is going to think we are a bunch of Communists."

The remark, as recounted by the diplomat, reflected a mixture of anger and depression among the 29-man Marine security contingent at the embassy.

The allegations that two Marine guards allowed Soviet agents to inspect sensitive areas of the embassy, has thrown a spotlight on the marines and prompted questions about whether they are particularly vulnerable to Soviet influence.

Least Prepared for Soviet Stay

Security procedures at the embassy were tightened this week to prevent a recurrence of the breaches, American diplomats said. They said that embassy staff members were assigned to watch sensitive areas at night to supplement the marines.

Of all the Americans here — diplomats, military officers, business executives, journalists, students and

scholars — the marines seem least prepared for their stay in the Soviet Union. They are generally in their early 20's, unversed in Russian and unfamiliar with the nation's culture. Unlike most Americans, who at least try to interact with Soviet society, the marines focus exclusively on embassy affairs.

They are discouraged from mixing with Russians, instructed to travel in pairs and obliged to turn for entertainment to the English-speaking community.

While most seem to adjust and make the best of their circumscribed world, some become bored and lonely, developing a tendency — for sheer excitement, if nothing else — to deal with the very world they are told to avoid.

That is apparently what happened in the spy case, where one marine, Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, was reportedly seduced by a woman who was a Soviet agent engaged in custodial work at the embassy.

The marines guard the embassy's main entrance and the ninth floor with its sensitive areas, patrolling the grounds and serving as firefighters. The unit is headed by a gunnery sergeant, who reports to the civilian security officer at the embassy.

Other Western embassies use experienced security forces, often drawn from the ranks of intelligence services, and consider the American system less reliable.

"No one has all the answers, but it invites trouble to turn over security to a group of young men who are more suited for combat than for guard duty," a Western European diplomat said.

The marines, while not mixing socially with senior diplomats, seem well integrated into the younger community of diplomats and students.

Their social world revolves around a cluster of Western nightspots, including "Uncle Sam's," an informal bar and discothèque set up evenings in the embassy snack bar, similar operations at other embassies and, on Saturday nights, the foreign currency bar and discothèque at the Cosmos Hotel.

For female companionship, they turn mainly to "nannies," a British term used here for young foreign women who are employed by Western residents to take care of their children.

Since last fall, the marines have been housed in a barracks in a new embassy compound, and have access to recreational areas in the compound, including an indoor pool, gymnasium and bowl-



Agence France-Presse

Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, a former guard at the American Embassy in Moscow, who has been charged with espionage.

ing alley.

The espionage case is not the only trouble to strike the Marine contingent. American diplomats said that four marines were sent home this year after they became involved in trading money on the black market. In a separate case, two marines were withdrawn when a Western woman said they had raped her.

Several nannies said that Marine parties often turned wild and that they were frightened at times by the aggressive behavior of the Americans.

Diplomats who knew Sergeant Lonetree described him as an isolated figure who never seemed comfortable in the embassy.

They said the man arrested as his accomplice, Cpl. Arnold Bracy, was friendly with many members of the American community and displayed curiosity about Soviet life, sometimes joining other Americans for dinner at restaurants.

"Arnold was one of the first marines here who ever wore a Russian fur hat," a friend recalled.

A British nanny said that Marine drills had increased and that access to the embassy was restricted for a period on Friday evening as the marines conducted a security exercise.

"There are not any Marine parties this weekend," she said. "It is pretty quiet over there."