

Survival of the fittest in the world's scramble for secrets

Henry L. Stimson, a famous US Secretary of State, did not like spying. Well before World War Two he closed down the "Black Chamber", America's centre for breaking the codes used by other nations, making the now-classic remark: "Gentlemen, do not read each other's mail." One consequence was Pearl Harbour: no co-ordinating

agency existed to correlate the many separate reports that presaged the Japanese attack.

Stimson was not as bright as the fifth century Chinese sage, Sun Tzu who said: "The reason the enlightened Prince and the Wise General conquer the enemy whenever they move is that they have prior knowledge of his plans."

Chairman Mao believes that even today: he has a highly complex intelligence service, under one Keng Biao, known as CELD, acronym for Central External Liaison Department. Mao knows that no country can do without spies. They are indeed wanted men - by their own countries, and by their enemies.

But spies and their organisations are going through a tough time. Those that used to cooperate now mostly distrust each other. America's CIA is under a three-fold investigation by a "blue ribbon" presidential commission and by Senate and House committees - and is having to disclose painful secrets. In consequence Britain's SIS, the Secret Intelligence Service, and its kindred, competitors D16 (espionage) and D15 (counter-espionage), are reluctant to confide in the Americans at the vast CIA headquarters, which cost almost R500 million and which houses 9000 workers, at Langley, Fairfax County, Virginia, a R5 taxi-trip from the White House.

Similarly, neither the British nor the Americans now trust the French Service de Documentation Extérieure et Contre Espionage, or SDECE.

Over the past 15 years few espionage organisations have suffered so many damaging scandals. Until 1970, the SDECE recruited ex-convicts and members of the underworld as agents, valuing brawn above brains. This inevitably led to mistakes.

In 1965 its agents were implicated in the assassination of a prominent Moroccan politician, Mehdi Ben Barka, one of the early leaders of the liberation movement. In the aftermath of the murder, General Paul Jacquier was dismissed. At the trial, sections of the French government, police, SDECE agents and members of the Paris underworld were implicated. General Oufkir, four French gangsters and a Moroccan secret agent were condemned *in absentia* to life imprisonment. An ironic sequel that in 1972 Oufkir was shot after masterminding an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Morocco's King Hassan during a garden party

in Rabat.

The SDECE agents and the underworld figures mentioned in the Ben Barka trial had one thing in common: they were all members of the Union Corse, an organisation that originated centuries ago in the parched hills of Corsica but is today centred in Marseilles, with tentacles stretching far into the Parisian underworld.

The Union Corse has immense political influence, stemming from the Corsicans' strong ties with the French Underground during World War Two. After the war many of the more ruthless assassins among its 15 clans were recruited as SDECE agents, with a licence to kill.

The late General De Gaulle issued a directive to his security services to consider the United States a potential enemy like Russia. This caused the SDECE to divert men and resources from Soviet to American targets, which naturally played into the hands of pro-Russian elements in the French secret service: most subsequent operations against the Soviet bloc were unsuccessful. For many years the CIA studiously avoided intelligence co-operation with the French because they believed the SDECE was packed with double agents. This assumption was strengthened by an SDECE agent, Thyraud de Vosjoli, who went over to the Americans and told the CIA that a senior French official was a Russian spy. His story was treated with reserve, but the CIA

knew that Russia's KGB possessed incriminating evidence about seven French intelligence agents based on their wartime connections with the Nazis - material supplied to Moscow by the French Communist Party from documents seized at the end of the war. Other Western countries lose a lot through dis-

trust of the French, for they have documentation of extra-ordinary thoroughness.

West Germany's secret service, the BND (Bundesnachrichtendienst) and counter-intelligence service, BFV, employ about 6000 people plus an unknown number of clandestine agents and spend about R50 million a year in their operation out of their headquarters at Pullach, near Munich.

In 1970, shortly after General Gerhard Wesel had taken over from the famous General Gehlen, the BND went through similar agonies to those the CIA is now experiencing over allegations of spying on fellow Americans. The BND had been spying on journalists and industrialists considered to be "political enemies."

On the other side of the Berlin Wall, in Normannenstrasse, Minister of State Security Erich Mielke is wanted in West Germany for a murder back in the Thirties. His secret service, the SSD with operational head Lieut-General Markus Wolf, has a network of 16 areas and 220 district offices in East Germany, and reputedly has a staff of 15000. Yet, it probably does not match the evil of the Nazi Party's own Sd and Third Reich's Gestapo, the Geheimestaatsspolizei.

Further east, at No 2 Dzershinsky Street in Moscow, close to the Kremlin, is the headquarters of Yuri Andropov (71), chairman of the Committee for State Security - another of those innocuous titles the international spy or-

Tools of the trade

Among substances recently shown to have been developed for use by "security organisations" are processed shellfish toxin and cobra venom. An inventory made public in the US last September included:

BZ: Blocks the transfer of impulses in the nervous system, resulting in paralysis.

CARBACHOL: Causes faintness, diarrhoea and nausea.

CINCHONINE: An anti-malarial drug; an overdose can result in cardiac arrest.

COLCHICINE: Paralyzes muscles, leading to asphyxiation.

CYANIDE L-PILLS: Carried by agents in

World War II; blocks the absorption of oxygen by the body's cells, resulting in an agonising death by asphyxiation.

DESMETHOXY RESERPINE: Reduces blood pressure; chronic use leads to severe mental depression.

DEHYDROACETIC ACID: Impairs kidney function and causes vomiting and convulsions.

NEUROKININ: Produces severe pain.

SALMONELLA: Causes intestinal inflammation and dysentery.

STRYCHNINE: Kills by causing convulsions and failure of the nervous system.

2-4 PYROLO: Causes amnesia.

M-246: Produces paralysis.

Cover Story

ganisations favour as "cover".

The committee is Komitet Gasudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti, or KGB for short. This is the latest acronym in a sinister series dating back to Ivan the Terrible's Oprichnina, Peter the Great's Special Office of the Czar and Lenin's Cheka. After Lenin's time came the simple-sounding General Political Administration, which was the OGPU or GPU of lurid memory, followed by Lavrento Beria's NKDV in 1934 and the KGB in 1954.

Soviet spy chiefs have included Ivan Setov, Alexander Shelepin, Vladimir Semichastny - no one laughed at the name - and now Andropov, another name without mirth.

Andropov was a Communist Youth leader in his twenties and ambassador to Hungary during the 1956 uprising. As he was also the KGB boss in Hungary, he helped to settle that little mess for Moscow.

Andropov's HQ building is split in two. Half is the admin office with a vast documentation centre that is a blackmailer's paradise. For 50 years the secret police have been building up docketts compiled on data from agents working at home and abroad and from members of communist parties in more than 50 countries. This mass of personal information was once described by an Australian Royal Commission on espionage as "a farrago of fact, falsity and filth".

The other half of Andropov's building is used for the infamous Lubianka prison, where Stalin had thousands of his opponents tortured and eliminated. Andropov is said to have a headquarters staff of 3 000 and about 323 000 employees in all, with a budget of rather more

twin security agencies in the US, the UK and France.

Britain got into the war and spy business long before most other countries. After the Danes had overrun his country Alfred the Great organised a concert party of innocent troubadors and mountebanks, with himself as star, and entertained the invaders in their strongholds until they were privy to all the invaders' plans. The old Firm still goes strong, but it too has had its scandals like the Americans, the French and the Germans.

There is now a mysterious Co-ordinator of Intelligence, Sir Peter Wilkinson, in Harold Wilson's Cabinet Office, to sort out the squabbles between SIS, D15 and D16 and the Special Branch. There is also a Director-General of Intelligence, since 1973 Sir Louis Le Bailly.

The head of D15 - people still think of it as M15 - is Sir Martin Furnival Jones, who is responsible for counter-espionage in British territories. For a long time this master spy-catcher, originally a lawyer, was faceless: he appeared in the Honours list in 1957 as "E.M.F. Jones, attached to the War Office".

Nobody has yet publicised the identity of the head of D16, which is "responsible for gathering covert intelligence and mounting subversive activities in non-British territories". It is rather like the CIA's "Office of Policy Co-ordination", the innocent name for the so-called "Black Side" that carried out clandestine operations such as overthrowing the Communist Chilean government and planning assassinations.

The Secret Intelligence Service, very much

werable only to the Prime Minister. Thus they are happier than the presently miserable CIA, with its total of 16 000 employees. The CIA might even be compelled some day to disclose whether it spends R650 million or R1 750 million a year - the range of current guesstimates. Its boss, Director William E. Colby, a Princeton graduate who spent his career on the clandestine side, was sacked last month by President Gerald Ford, and is now out in the cold. His former CIA chief, James Schlesinger, has also been fired as Secretary of State for Defence.

The military DIA (Defence Intelligence Agency) which was created in 1961 and has always aimed at taking over the civilian CIA, born 1947, is breathing down the neck of the CIA's new chief, George Bush.

The American public and politicians have brought about the compulsory undressing of the CIA. Like Henry Stimson, they have an aversion to foreign involvement and to spying. They are showing all the signs of disapproving of the clandestine "Dark Side" and of plots to assassinate "unsuitable" foreign politicians.

So they are well on their way to debagging and emasculating the secret service man who used to be only faceless. Cloak-and-dagger people an ineffectual without dagger or cloak.

Indeed, the blunting of the CIA's dagger may be the reason the Soviets plus their KGB have got into Angola first. And therein lies much concern for South Africa.

South Africa and some of the countries friendly with it swop officially accepted professional "spies" - accredited military attaches. Abroad, the Republic has stationed senior officers as armed-forces attaches at eight of its 24 embassies. These are in London, Washington, Paris, Lisbon, Rome, Buenos Aires, Canberra and, perhaps surprisingly, Malawi. A military adviser is also attached to the accredited diplomatic representative in Rhodesia. Some of these officers are also accredited to the capitals of other countries conveniently close to their bases.

Seventeen foreign embassies function in Pretoria. Defence, army, naval and air attaches are on the staffs at five of them - the British, American, French, Portuguese and Argentine embassies; and Rhodesia's accredited diplomatic representative in Pretoria maintains army and air "counsellors".

The United States and the United Kingdom have heavyweight teams, with senior officers representing each of their services. The British naval, military and air attaches may become political footballs: Labour's Left-wing recently demanded that they be withdrawn and that the armed-forces attaché at South Africa House in Trafalgar Square should be discredited.

The American attaches in Pretoria are acknowledged. Any CIA operatives who may be in South Africa are not.

The military men sent abroad in their countries' interests are overt and respectable, known to and entertained by Defence Minis-



KGB chief Yuri Andropov - said to have a budget of more than R1 000 million or 100 times SA's entire defence quota



CIA ex-chief William Colby - whose former organisation is going through a tough time as its secrets are revealed

than R1 000 million a year, or 100 times South Africa's entire defence quota. Opponents estimate that he has about 20 000 operative and "illegals" abroad, 16 000 in West Germany alone; and that, like the CIA, he maintains about 60 "stations" in foreign countries. (Britain and France, it is believed, maintain about 30 secret service stations in other countries.)

Russia has another security set-up - the Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye, the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Army General Staff, or GRU. Apparently KGB and GRU are as much rivals in the USSR as the

an Old School Tie organisation, is closely linked with British embassies abroad and maintains a gentlemanly feud with D16. Its chief for the past two years has been Maurice Oldfield. He succeeded Sir John Rennie, who after only a few months' tenure of his hush-hush office resigned after he had burst into dreadful notoriety when his son was exposed as a heroin pusher. Young Rennie had been trapped by wily agents of China's CELD.

The British secret service agencies do not have to disclose their budget nor the number of their employees to Parliament and are ans-



Geldenhuys: caught Russian spy Loginov

ters, Service chiefs, diplomats and dignitaries. They are invited to watch and study military exercises, manoeuvres and displays of weapons and equipment. All the information they gather, plus their evaluations and opinions, is flown home in the untouchable diplomatic bags. Attaches do not rely only on their own eyes and ears. They have unacknowledged agents who could be termed spies but, like commercial travellers who prefer to be known as representatives, are usually dignified by the name of operatives or agents.

Assembling military intelligence is not usually the difficult, dangerous and dramatic business novelists make it out to be. Most of it depends on intelligence in the other sense of the world: the commonsense collection, collation and interpretation of facts fairly easily ascertainable. Uncensored newspapers, magazines, newsreels, radio, TV and other published material – even telephone directories – provide masses of data. A Johannesburg journalist some years ago wrote an article headed "How To Be A Spy in One Easy Lesson". He pointed out that the locations of many army and air force units all over the country were pinpointed in directories. For example, the Pretoria directory in the Government (Defence-Air Force) section when listing No 1 Fighter Squadron said: "See Pietersburg". The Defence Force entries are no longer as specific and detailed as they were.

Not much military data in South Africa is really top secret. Defence Minister Piet Botha and the Newspaper Press Union have reached a fairly workable agreement on self-censorship and consultation on matters that might be sensitive. In practice, when it seems possible that the Defence Act or the Official Secrets Act might be breached, the accredited military correspondent of a major publication may consult the Minister or the Chief of the Defence Force, at any hour, if their Director of

Public Relations cannot come up with an answer. But in reality it also means that there may be no publication, without clearance, of reports of battle casualties or details of new equipment – particularly important purchases, of aircraft or tanks, say, from friendly foreign powers, particularly France and Italy, who might be embarrassed internationally. This is the prime reason, not a vain hope of secrecy, for not publicising accretions to the Republic's armed strength. In fact, if South Africa is buying submarines or jets from France, every intelligence service in the world, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, knows it almost immediately.

Nevertheless South Africa, like every other sophisticated country, tries to make it difficult for foreign agents to get too complete a picture of its military state. Prime Minister John Vorster has laid overall responsibility for the nation's safety on the lofty shoulders of General Hendrik van den Bergh, who as his personal adviser ranks as secretary for security intelligence. He carries more weight than most cabinet ministers. "Lang Hendrik" in turn leans heavily on his deputy in the Bureau for State Security, Hans Brummer, whose highly responsible role carries no police or paramilitary rank. The bureau is based in Concilium House, Pretoria, but its police-trained agents operate in many countries, often in close if tacit association with their security agencies.

The bureau is strictly an intelligence-gleaning operation. It does not function as a law-enforcement agency and, like the CIA in America and D15 in Britain, has no powers of arrest or subpoena. It advises, and refers these functions to, the Security Police branch of the SAP under Major-General Mike Geldenhuys (50). Van den Bergh, however, did personally arrest the most notorious Red agent caught in South Africa, Yuri Loginov – but left it to Geldenhuys to produce the Russian, like a rabbit from a hat, as an exhibit for the Press.

The Special Branch has been consistently successful in rounding up agitators and plotters. Its latest, and quite theatrical, success was the detection, arrest and subsequent conviction, with a sentence last week of nine years in

jail, of the Afrikaans poet and painter Breyten Breytenbach. Living in Paris in self-imposed exile with his Vietnamese wife, Breytenbach returned to South Africa under an assumed name with plans for an underground organisation named Okhela, or Atlas, to overthrow the white government and replace it with a black one.

Geldenhuys, a former assistant to Van den Bergh, is tipped as the next Commissioner of Police. That would mean only a short move from one floor to another in police headquarters in the Wachthuis building in Pretoria.

Nearby, Poynton Centre's eighteenth floor accommodates the Defence Force's Directorate-General of Military Intelligence, whose task it is to acquire and process information, and the Directorate of Counter-intelligence, whose task it is to deny information to the "enemy" and others. These groups are headed by the Chief of Staff Intelligence, Lieutenant-General Hein de V. du Toit – the only general officer whose photograph is not available for publication.

Van den Bergh, who derives and exercises direct personal authority from Vorster, has an overriding role of co-ordination. This is a consequence of a mortifying lack of co-operation some years ago between the then Director of Military Intelligence, a brigadier, and the Security Police, then headed by Van den Bergh. The Defence Force intelligence chief did not disclose investigations his officers were making in Paris while the police on their own were making investigations in Cape Town into certain student activities.

The upshot was that it took far longer than it might have done for the police to lay their hands on the army's suspects. "Lang Hendrik" demanded, and got, the power to ensure that such a muddle could not occur again – at least not if he could help it.

Van den Bergh, Geldenhuys and even Du Toit are not so much concerned with sophisticated military spies as with potential infiltrators, agitators and saboteurs, some of them South African-born and living here, others political exiles indoctrinated and trained in Russia, China, Algeria, Tanzania and hostile areas elsewhere.

CIA headquarters: 9 000 workers at Langley, Virginia

