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Senior K.G.B. Man Said to Defect And Give Spying Data to the West

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 26 — A senior member of the K.G.B. has defected and is providing information to the West about Soviet espionage operations in Europe and the United States, Reagan Administration officials said today.

Some officials said that the defector, Vitaly Yurchenko, 50 years old, had also identified several employees of the Central Intelligence Agency as Soviet agents. It was not clear from the accounts of the American officials whether those involved were contract employees or full-fledged C.I.A. officers.

The reported defection of Mr. Yurchenko is the latest in a series of such episodes that have rocked intelligence agencies in both the East and West, including the defection to the West this summer of the K.G.B. station chief in London and the defection to East Germany of the chief West German spy-catcher.

In another of these developments, officials confirmed today that Sergei Bokhan, the deputy director of Soviet military intelligence in Athens, had defected to the West in May and has provided information about the penetration of the Greek Government by Soviet agents.

The officials, who asked not be identified, said Mr. Yurchenko has been taken to an undisclosed location in the United States, where he is being questioned by C.I.A. officials.

If his charges are borne out by further investigation, they may confirm the longtime suspicions of some intelligence agents that the C.I.A. has been compromised by one or more Americans who were secretly working as Soviet agents.

George Lauder, a C.I.A. spokesman, said he would have no comment on any defections or on suggestions that double agents had been discovered in the agency.

Described as Rising Figure

Administration officials and senior intelligence sources described Mr. Yurchenko as a rising figure in the K.G.B.

An intelligence source said the defections are expected to harm Soviet spy networks in Europe and elsewhere. He said American intelligence analysts expect the Russians to begin withdrawing large numbers of agents on the assumption they have been compromised.

The officials said that as a result of Mr. Bokhan's information the United States has delayed its planned sale of F-16 fighter jets to Greece. Officials said the arrests last week in Athens of three men in the Greek armed forces on charges of spying for the Soviet Union also arose after Mr. Bokhan was questioned.

In West Germany, the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl has been shaken by a series of high-level defections.

Since the beginning of August, a senior West German counterintelligence officer, two secretaries and an army messenger have vanished from West

Germany; all are believed to be in East Berlin. Each is suspected of having been a spy for the Eastern bloc for a number of years.

One of the most serious of these, officials say, was the defection in August of Hans Joachim Tiedge, a top counterintelligence officer in charge of catching East German spies. A spokesman for the West German Interior Ministry said that he left three days after a security check into his background had been ordered.

The spokesman said that the suspicions had been raised because he drank heavily and led a disorderly life, not because he was thought to be an East German agent.

Kohl Secretary Vanishes

Three weeks later, it was disclosed that a secretary in Chancellor Kohl's office had defected with her husband. The secretary, Herta-Astrid Willner, and her husband, Herbert Adolf Willner, disappeared while on vacation in Spain.

Also this summer, Oleg A. Gordiyevsky, a K.G.B. official who officials say had a long career as a double agent, defected to the West from his post in London. Several officials suggested that he had ended a profitable career in the service of the West out of fears that he was about to be caught.

Officials said that Mr. Yurchenko, who had been stationed in Italy, was a more senior member of the Soviet K.G.B. than Mr. Gordiyevsky.

"He was very high up and ascending," said one intelligence source.

Soviet Agents 'Fingered'

Several officials speculated that Mr. Yurchenko's defection had prompted the defections of the agents in West Germany. Another senior intelligence source cautioned that the recent spate of espionage episodes may be coincidental, rather than directly connected.

Concerning the latest reported defector, the intelligence source said: "He has fingered a number of Soviet agents around the world. Some of them have already returned to the Soviet Union. Others will probably be going on home leave soon."

He added that American analysts believe the defections have caused confusion in the Russians' intelligence planning. "They have no idea how much has been given away," he said. "They can't be sure who he has fingered. It has got to be causing real problems for them."

It is not clear whether the series of espionage revelations has any connection with the summit meeting between President Reagan and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, scheduled for Nov. 19-20 in Geneva. One Administration official said that Mr. Reagan had been briefed on the Yurchenko defection and its implications.

Mr. Lauder, the C.I.A. spokesman, said that the agency traditionally does not comment on defections and that he would not answer questions about Mr. Yurchenko's whereabouts or the information he might have provided.

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