

Northern Flank by Göran Haglund

KGB scandals probed by . . . the KGB

Soviet services specialize in drunken diplomatic drivers, Russian call girls, fake marriages, and ikon smuggling.

A special Soviet intelligence team paid a visit to the Soviet embassy in Stockholm in July. Constituting a commission of inquiry, the high-powered team was assigned to call the embassy to account for several irritating scandals that have erupted lately.

Lead by Yevgenii Rymko, from the Soviet Central Committee's powerful International Department, himself stationed three times in Sweden, the team also included two top KGB officers, Ivan Majorov and Yuri Sokolov. A similar inquiry into embassy functions was made in 1982-83, after seven diplomats were expelled from Sweden as spies.

The célèbre visit was, first of all, connected with the spectacular case of two Soviet diplomats who were caught by Swedish police on June 28 near Stockholm, driving drunk. Attempting to escape from several police roadblocks, the two intoxicated drivers finally ended up in a ditch.

Although the ever-helpful Swedish foreign ministry refused to disclose their identities, leaks quickly established that they were First Embassy Secretary Vladimir Minin, said to be the new chief of the KGB in Sweden, and Third Embassy Secretary Vladimir Titov, the son of KGB Gen. Genadii Titov, controller of convicted Norwegian KGB spy Arne Treholt.

Arousing outrage in a country where drunken driving means prison for those without diplomatic immunity, the embassy, rather than regretting the incident or just shutting up, had its press secretary arrogantly attack the Swedish police. Claiming that

the cause of the car's drive into the ditch was that both front tires blew out, the embassy denied that the drivers were drunk, saying that they possibly smelled of garlic. . . .

"At first, this flat denial may seem ridiculous," wrote the Gothenburg newspaper *GT*, "but it is in fact very serious. The Soviet embassy under Ambassador Boris Pankin's leadership has begun to display ever more big-power arrogance."

Two days later, a Soviet trade mission official in Stockholm was expelled for espionage. This followed by two months the expulsion of five Czech diplomats who had targeted Swedish naval installations, on behalf of the KGB.

A few days later, press leaks revealed a ring of Russian call girls operating from Stockholm night clubs. Looking for clients among Swedish businessmen, the well-organized ring is coordinated by a Soviet "defector," a Russian emigré businessman, who works closely with the Soviet embassy.

"The women make the men believe they're prostitutes, while in reality they're working for the KGB," one source said. According to one businessman who met with a KGB call girl, "The woman was incredibly interested in my job, my position, and how I was getting on in my job."

Most Russian call girls were married briefly to Swedish men, and thus obtained Swedish names. They marry a Swede, get a visa to Sweden, and then divorce. Swedish police sources say that this activity is known, but for

lack of personnel, the evidence required to put an end to it has never been collected.

Fake marriages are generally used by the Soviets to set up intelligence assets in the West. In one case, an emigré Estonian, backed by a Jewish organization in Boston, Massachusetts, has simply opened up offices in the café of a Stockholm department store. Here he coordinates fake marriages with Soviet citizens who want to leave their country, at the rate of \$6,000 per person, and services about 12 persons a month.

Working with contact persons in the Soviet Union, the Estonian marriage agent admits being well connected to the Soviet embassy, where he personally knows five or six diplomats. "I am aware that the embassy is using people in exile as intelligence sources," he told a journalist.

In some cases, where the just-married Soviet citizen is unwitting, he or she is recruited to Soviet intelligence only after arriving in the West, exchanging sensitive information on a Swedish husband's job, for instance, for favorable treatment when applying for a visa to visit relatives remaining in Russia. Once an initial, however, small favor is done for the KGB, blackmail ensures that no possible escalation of spy activities will be left unexploited.

One source of financing for the KGB is smuggling ikons. Swedish police are investigating one ring which has smuggled ikons, gold and silver objects, and antiques. Everyone involved is an exile Russian, often coming to the West through a fake marriage. In houses of suspects, police found handguns, large sums of money, and Soviet birth certificates in which names and dates were not yet filled in, but which already had authentic Soviet stamps.