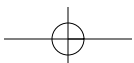
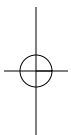


PART VIII
Strengthening Defenses Against
Proliferation, Crime, and Terrorism



CHAPTER 22

Forging a CIA-KGB Connection
While Working for Neither

The author finds himself moving beyond a congressional “travel campaign” into an effort to get a deputy CIA director to visit Russia and, from there, to a quiet effort, which moves quickly at first and then slowly, to persuade the CIA to work with the KGB on matters of common interest such as proliferation, crime, and terrorism. To overcome reluctance, the author targets North Korea as an example and exhibits KGB willingness to participate. In the end, the talks start exactly there.

It all started, quite innocently, on October 14, 1988, at an open meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The speaker was the deputy director of the CIA, Robert M. Gates, and he was speaking on Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. In closing, he invited questions, “no matter how irreverent,” and I could not resist the bait. “Dr. Gates,” I said, “I think we can all agree that none of us would take sex education classes from a virgin, no matter how well-informed that person might be on sex. In this connection, may I ask if you have ever visited the Soviet Union, that is, had personal intercourse with it?”

The attentive reader will immediately realize that this was no more than a provocative restatement of the already embarrassing question we had developed for our congressional travel campaign (Chapter 13). But it got a big laugh. Gates finally admitted that he had not been to the Soviet Union and said the “welcome mat” was not out in the USSR for intelligence officers.

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Not willing to quit while I was ahead, I persisted. "How many other CIA officials who helped you with that speech were also virgins?" At this point, the old boy network kicked in. The moderator of the AAAS-hosted speech was Sidney Greybeal, who had worked for the CIA for fourteen years (rising to become division chief of foreign missile and space activities).³⁹⁷ He announced, "We are not going to permit questions that denigrate Government agencies or speakers." Greybeal later advised me, in private, that he thought no intelligence officials were *allowed by the United States* to travel to the Soviet Union and that, in his opinion, the question should not have been asked!

After the talk, I approached Gates and, in friendly conversation, explained my point of view on visits. "Would you," I asked, "visit the Soviet Union if I could get you an invitation?" He had, after all, said it was a question of a "welcome mat." His answer was professionally gray. But I was determined to pursue it.

When I saw that his admission of not having been to the Soviet Union was reported in *The New York Times*, I felt he would have more than the normal motivation to go.³⁹⁸ I wrote to Ambassador Yuri V. Dubinin, who had, he once indicated to me, somehow determined that I was an American "Velikhov." (Of course, Velikhov was a real scientist, a senior member of his scientific academy, and a *real* operator; but I did not try to dissuade Dubinin.)

My letter explained the humorous situation and recalled the "truly useful effects" of the meeting between the Chiefs of Staff of our two countries, Marshall Akhromeyev and Admiral William J. Crowe. Would the Soviet government have any interest in inviting Gates as a "tourist" or as a guest of the KGB, "where, we read, new departures are taking place"?

I mentioned the possibility that a "certain communication between intelligence officers" might be relevant to "prevent terrorist activity by third parties or whatever." But my main goal was, as the ambassador well knew, to prevent high officials of both governments from "flying blind" in their assessments of each other.

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I sent a copy of this letter to Gates, saying that “I would not normally presume to bypass your undoubtedly marvelous collection techniques but thought you might welcome receiving a blind copy of this letter to Dubinin directly.”³⁹⁹ (I was enjoying this.)

Absolutely nothing happened; no response. But a month later, Andrei Sakharov was permitted to come to America as a guest of the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity. At a dinner for him at the National Academy of Sciences, I approached Ambassador Dubinin and told him the story; he asked me to send the letter again, marked “personal.”⁴⁰⁰

On December 13, 1988, I wrote to Gates: “While I have had no word yet from Ambassador Dubinin on the initiative we discussed, I assume that the agency is, by now, studying one relevant question: ‘Is there a role in bilaterals for the intelligence community?’ May I contribute some ideas to this study?”

I *know* that someone must have tipped me to this, because frankly, I would otherwise never, never, have used the jargon (to me) “bilateral.” Thus, on the mere hint that I might have stirred up interest in contacts between the intelligence communities, I sent a two-page letter to the director of the CIA, William Webster, mentioning six possible areas of common interest: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorist activities, drug trafficking, threat perception, third-world developments, and mutual misconceptions. But my emphasis was still on just getting some exchanges of visits started “while General-Secretary Gorbachev is there to insist that such exchanges are consistent with his world view.”

On December 18, with no word from Moscow, I had lunch in Washington with Georgi Arbatov, still the director of the Soviet Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada. By this time, I had known him for more than twenty years. I asked Arbatov to take the matter up with the KGB chief, Vladimir Alexandrovich Kryuchkov, whom he said he had known for a long time. Arbatov considered Kryuchkov (who turned out to be one of the anti-Gorbachev coup plotters) a “decent individual” who had been among other decent

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individuals selected by Andropov—including, of course, Gorbachev himself. He agreed to report back on any reaction to my proposal when we saw each other again at the upcoming January 16 meeting in Moscow, which both of us, and Gorbachev, were planning to attend.⁴⁰¹

I had written Senator William Cohen, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, to alert him to what I was trying to do and had enclosed my letter to Dubinin. I got a characteristically thoughtful and serious two-page letter from Cohen on December 28. One paragraph, in particular, seemed very promising:

The efforts you have undertaken to encourage reciprocal official visits on the parts of Soviets and Americans have played an important role in improving communications and mutual understanding between our two countries. *They provide an excellent base on which to build further cooperative steps.* (emphasis added)

Cohen indicated that the Senate Intelligence Committee had the same restrictions on its members and staff that the intelligence community did in terms of unofficial visits, but that it did encourage “official travel” to embassies or consulates.^[402]

Right after the New Year’s holiday, I received a call at 9 A.M. from a person unknown to me, Vyacheslav Zakharovich Borovikov, the first secretary of the Soviet embassy in charge of security. He wanted to provide an answer to my letter to Dubinin. Obviously, he represented the KGB—for a while I assumed that he was head of the KGB station, but he later said that he was not.

Remembering a hint I had once received from William Colby not to do anything seemingly furtive, I invited him to meet with me at my office, and I immediately sent Judge William Webster, CIA director, a letter reporting on my conversation. (At this stage of my life, I had never visited CIA headquarters and simply put my letter in the mail.)⁴⁰³ In my office, Borovikov said my letter had been reviewed at the “highest level”—which always meant Gorbachev—

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and had been considered with “understanding and support.” He continued, “If any of the highest-level officials of the CIA wanted to meet their counterparts in Moscow, it could be done in entire security and confidentiality. If there were any practical considerations in this respect, they would be happy to deal with them.”

When I drew him out, Borovikov indicated the visitors could apply as guests of the ambassador. He indicated that the visits need not involve meeting counterparts—but could just be visits. “Highest-level” CIA officials, he said, meant director and deputies. Asked if the KGB chief would be permitted to meet with Americans, he said he “thought so” but it would be decided, again, at the “highest level”—meaning Gorbachev, not Kryuchkov.

He asked me, in effect, to be an intermediary on this and to inform him and the CIA of any developments. I ventured the gratuitous advice that if the Russians wanted exchanges, they should offer some helpful information that could hardly be refused and that could provide a basis for further exchanges. I promptly transmitted information about all of this to Gates, who was moving on to the White House as deputy national security adviser, and Webster.

On January 5 *The Washington Post* reported that our ambassador in Moscow, Jack Matlock, had two days earlier had an unprecedented ninety-minute meeting with the KGB chief, Kryuchkov, on January 3. The article said that Matlock had asked for the appointment, and that Kryuchkov “appears to have made a favorable impression” (this is the very same Kryuchkov who later conspired to overthrow Gorbachev). When a Foreign Ministry spokesman was asked if the Soviet ambassador would be calling on the director of the CIA, he said “such a step could not be excluded.”⁴⁰⁴

I invited Borovikov to visit the day before I left for Moscow. When Borovikov and I got together on that January 9, I offered to meet with Kryuchkov or one of his deputies—but nobody lower—to try to help bring this intelligence dialogue about. (I felt that the lower-level people ran spies, turned agents, and so on, but that con-

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tacts with high officials were more consistent with what I was trying to arrange.) I again emphasized that I did not work for the U.S. government, that the ideas were my own, but that I would inform the U.S. government of anything I was told.

Borovikov was not sure whether Matlock's visit to the KGB chief was coincidental or related to my initiative. He said the invitation was not really to Gates personally but that if authorized to speak for the intelligence community, Gates could come in his new White House capacity as deputy national security adviser. He seemed a bit upset when I said, "Because you represent an intelligence service and because all such services are trained to manipulate people, I want to note, for the record, that I would immediately break off any contact and abandon this project if there were the slightest effort to pressure me or any of my friends or associates here or there [I had a few friends in Moscow] in connection with this dialogue. But I am sure that you are all too sophisticated and too well aware of my record of independence for that."

He said he wished I had not said that, but he added that there would be "no tricks." It must have sounded naive and virginal to him; I sensed that he felt that it marred my record for sophistication and would make his colleagues less willing to deal with me. But when dining with the devil, I was determined to sup with a long spoon.

It was evident, however, that the KGB wanted the diplomatic entities out of it. Borovikov had advised Ambassador Dubinin only tangentially of his meeting with me. (This was a longstanding pattern in Russian affairs; even Czarist ambassadors had no authority over the Czarist secret police.)

While I was in Moscow, no contact with the KGB was proposed by anyone, but I did participate in a roundtable meeting with Gorbachev. Upon returning on January 17, I received a letter from Gates. He said "events had moved too rapidly" for him or Judge Webster to respond immediately but that he found my "suggestions and initiatives quite interesting." On the other hand, "The U.S.

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Government must be careful that it does not send the wrong signal to those who would be watching such developments that we might be sharing information beyond that normally exchanged in diplomatic channels.” Gates repeated that “the situation seems to be changing rather quickly,” and he expressed interest in hearing any “new insights about your original ideas.” He said he was moving to his new position as deputy assistant to the president for national-security affairs; on the bottom, he wrote in longhand, “Maybe now I’ll finally get to the USSR.”

On February 1 William Cohen suggested to me that Ambassador Dubinin just apply for a “private, one-on-one, appointment” with William Webster—paralleling the appointment in Moscow but with “no public announcement anticipated” (as there had been in Moscow). Later, Cohen authorized me to advise Dubinin that the suggestion had come from him.⁴⁰⁵

In a letter of February 6, I urged Dubinin to accept. I said that “it seems evident that the [Soviet government] would prefer that such contacts finesse the foreign ministries of both sides” but that this is “not possible on the U.S. side to the same degree” as it would be for the Soviet government. It seemed to me that the dialogue on common interests “would likely be under the general oversight of a U.S. ambassador somewhere (e.g., Vienna),” albeit with the participation of members of the intelligence community. And discussions held in Washington to get it started “would probably have to involve yourself.”⁴⁰⁶

In a footnote added at the last minute, I indicated that Cohen planned to be in Moscow in March and that I hoped he would be able to discuss his ideas for dialogue with Kryuchkov. In a February 6 meeting with Borovikov, I handed him the letter to Dubinin.

I heard nothing further. On March 23, six weeks later, I wrote Dubinin with another copy of the letter. (“Not having had any reaction from you to me or to Senator Cohen, I am sending you a second copy in case this letter was lost.”) Still nothing. (Much later, I learned that Dubinin did, indeed, get his meeting at the CIA and

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that Senator Cohen’s call had encouraged CIA director Webster to agree to the meeting.)

Gates got his first trip to Moscow in May 1989, and only because Secretary of State James Baker believed in taking a large inter-agency contingent with him for Soviet talks. Whether the visit had an effect on his thinking, I did not then learn. But in a later interview he said the impact on him of the visit was “more cultural than political,” that Moscow was a lot dirtier than he expected, and that he saw “some guy with tomatoes for sale, all spoiled.” The visit also “validated what I had read and heard about” and he knew that it was “better in Moscow than in other places.” As laughable as it might seem, this is the stuff for which we wanted congressional and executive-branch travel.

The Effort to Get Information on North Korea

By December 18, 1991, two years later, I had returned from a week’s visit to North Korea, where I was hosted by Professor Hwang Jang Yop, the twenty-fourth most powerful man in North Korea, whose subsequent defection in February 1997 became a world media event.

Indeed, my final success in a five-year struggle to gain permission for a reciprocal visit for Hwang to the United States might have destabilized his situation. My comprehensive, all-expenses-paid invitation to him, sent on March 29, 1996, advised him that the Department of State had finally agreed to his coming. A month later, at the end of April, the North Korean mission in New York told me the visit had been approved. Excerpts from three letters smuggled out by Hwang in the fall of 1996 show that “the authorities began attacking me on May 9, 1996.”⁴⁰⁷ It was at about this time that the mission representatives began insulting me and saying that Hwang would never come because I was “arrogant.”

By this time, I felt I knew, if only slightly, both the U.S. and the Soviet directors of foreign intelligence. Gates had, by that time,

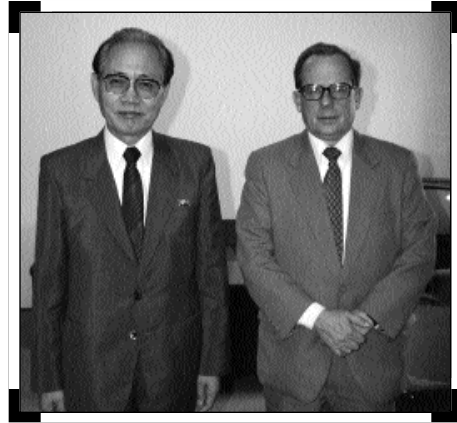
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been nominated to be director of Central Intelligence. And after the coup attempt, Gorbachev appointed Yevgeny Primakov head of the External Intelligence Directorate of the Interrepublican Council for Security—that is, head of a foreign intelligence service that was “separate” from the domestic KGB (in 1998 he became prime minister).

I had met Primakov when he was the head of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO). When I first met him, he was on his way to China, and I briefed him on my experiences there in 1972. He was intelligent and pleasant; I found him quite agreeable.

I checked with the North Korea desk in the State Department to see whether they were securing information from the Russians on North Korea because this seemed a perfect issue of common concern to test the possibility of cooperation. It was evident they were not because the desk director, Charles Kartman, agreed with me that it would be fine if I tried to get such information from Moscow.⁴⁰⁸ I called the Soviet embassy to see if Borovikov was there. The next day they sent his replacement, Vyatcheslav N. Zhukov. I gave him the background on my interest and a letter to Primakov. The letter stated that I was “acting on my own initiative” but that I wanted information on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear weapons program and information on the DPRK government and society. The bomb program, I argued, would “soon hold Vladivostok hostage to another Korean war.” It was definitely a matter of common concern.

Zhukov said that he was, indeed, the liaison for Primakov and that he was “authorized to begin talking to the U.S. side on three topics: terrorism, drug peddling, and organized crime.” But he said



In his capacity as the president of the Korean Association of Social Scientists, Hwang Jang Yop (who defected to China and then South Korea), here meeting with the author in North Korea in 1991

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that the talks had not really gotten started. In particular, Gates had not been around to meet with Primakov when Primakov had recently been in the United States. Zhukov promised to send my letter along, with a covering letter from him. And I wrote Gates about it the next day, saying, “I am, I fear, at it again—trying now to get some cooperation on preventing a DPRK bomb.”⁴⁰⁹

On January 9, 1992, Zhukov showed up, quite pleased, with a prompt and kind oral answer from Primakov that had come, he said, between Christmas and New Year’s (thus, a ten-day turnaround!), while I was out of town: “Your contribution to the cause of nonproliferation of nuclear weapons is highly appreciated in Russia. Mr. Primakov himself knows your highest scientific qualifications [an exaggeration put in, perhaps, for those below Primakov who would see the communication]. The contents of your report to the Senate of the United States [my testimony to the Cranston Subcommittee] will be compared with what information we have in Moscow. After this analysis, it will be possible to plan different contacts between Russian and American representatives. *In any case, we are ready for all forms of constructive cooperation with the USA, including its special services.* [emphasis added] And we are together with the U.S. in wanting to end proliferation.”⁴¹⁰

On January 21, less than two weeks later, I actually received a letter from Primakov, who said he was willing to cooperate with anyone or anything:

I take this opportunity to assure you that Russia is sincere in its desire to cooperate, including cooperation on the confidential basis, with all states, individuals, and organizations in averting of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. . . . I can not help mentioning that now we can already see results of implementing of some of your recommendations by the diplomatic service of your country. [Wow!]⁴¹¹

On January 29, 1992, I decided to take Primakov up on his offer to cooperate “with all states, individuals, and *organizations.*”

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(emphasis added) I asked him to send one of their analysts of North Korean affairs to Washington to hold a suitable off-the-record seminar, under any cover they wanted and with agreed-upon ground rules. Bill Colby, a former CIA director, had agreed to participate, and, of course, I mentioned this alluring fact. (And I kept Gates informed, calling this an “experiment.”)^[412] As a courtesy, and also as a precaution, I wrote to inform the FBI’s assistant director for counterintelligence of what was going on.⁴¹³

But nothing resulted. I thought CIA had contacted Primakov directly or that Primakov really had little to say on this subject. But guess what? Eight months later, on October 14, *The Washington Times* opened an article with this paragraph: “CIA Director Robert Gates begins the first-ever talks in Moscow tomorrow between a U.S. intelligence chief and former Cold War adversaries about joint cooperation against terrorism, drug trafficking, and arms proliferation.”⁴¹⁴

And guess what else? According to the article:

Yuri Kobaladze, a spokesman for the Russian Intelligence Service, known by its Russian initials as the SVR, said in a recent interview that plans for the Gates-Primakov meeting have been under way for months. “It’s a very important meeting,” said Mr. Kobaladze, a former KGB operative who worked undercover as a Soviet journalist. “It is my understanding that it took some time to agree on all the details.”

It sure had!^[415]

In fact, I later learned from an impeccable source that the CIA had made intelligence on North Korea a “test case” of Soviet intentions to cooperate on issues of common interest. And this may explain why we never heard back from Primakov about setting up a special meeting, chaired by Colby, to examine North Korea. Encouraged by the CIA’s making this a test case, Primakov may have moved to working directly with the relevant official agency rather than with us. In sum, an NGO (nongovernmental organiza-

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tion) initiative may have triggered specific action on a test case of the willingness and ability of the CIA and the KGB to work together on matters of common interest.

For the most part, I had let the security agencies run their business without comment. But sometimes I could not restrain myself. For example, in 1977 I complained to the CIA director, George Bush, that newspaper stories showed that the CIA was not checking the briefcases of its employees for classified documents upon their exit—this was the same failure of the RAND Corporation that made Daniel Ellsberg's theft of the Pentagon Papers possible.⁴¹⁶

In 1983, I dared to give military advice to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff about a danger in Beirut; my telegram to General John Vessey read as follows:

The Beirut Anonymous Telephone Caller's reference to generating "A real earthquake under their feet" suggests that there has been tunneling under U.S. positions or installations and explosions emplaced. Please ask Marine security to consider this possibility.⁴¹⁷

He later thanked me for the telegram. So, in 1987, when General Vessey was part of a commission investigating the security of the U.S. embassy in Moscow, I wrote to him explaining why I thought the Moscow embassy was bugged and how I had tried to warn the State Department. (Soviet officials were asking me not to relay their quiet, not-for-publication, comments to our embassy, which I took to mean that they feared the KGB's finding out about their comments through embassy eavesdropping.)⁴¹⁸ And in 1993, I wrote an article in *The Wall Street Journal* complaining that the FBI was being charged by federal agencies with "the responsibility to elicit and thoroughly explore comments bearing on a job applicant's ability to be fair and free of biases against any class of citizens."⁴¹⁹ These interventions with intelligence community issues were about all I had earlier permitted myself.

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But the KGB-CIA connection effort grew so naturally out of efforts to secure travel to the Soviet Union that I could not restrain myself from taking action. I considered it hazardous politically. I well knew the story of the little old lady on a bus during the McCarthy era who was heard to say, "Well, if this McCarthy is a Communist, why don't they put him in jail?" By that standard, any contact with the letters *KGB*, no matter how well-intentioned and well-organized, could be hazardous to one's political health. But the issue seemed too important to be dropped.

This shift, in midcampaign, from "travel" to the Soviet Union per se to "bilaterals" between the CIA and the KGB on subjects of common concern reflects a general experience of political activism, where one opportunity leads to another if the activists are sufficiently alert and entrepreneurial. The big break came when, as noted, my letter to Dubinin was shown to Gorbachev, who approved it. This is why events began to move swiftly, as noted in Gates's letter of January 17.

When things slowed down, my effort to turn my visit to North Korea into a test of the Soviet KGB's willingness to cooperate was another example of an opportunity seized. And it appears to have turned into a test case of more general cooperation between these two enormous sources of information: the CIA and the KGB.

The moral here is yet another reason why foundation funding for specific efforts, rather than for specific persons, often unduly constrains the results. Like venture capitalists, the philanthropists ought to give priority to people rather than to projects in funding political activism, because the activists do not know what is going to work until they try; indeed, they often don't know what they are going to be trying until they enter the arena.



Yevgeny Primakov (second on the left) and Robert M. Gates (full profile, right) meet in October 1992

