

Interview with Richard Helms
by Dr. Robert M. Hathaway
30 May 1984

TAPE 1 - SIDE 1

Hathaway: Why don't you start just by giving us in a general way some of your thoughts about how you see or saw the counterintelligence function.

Helms: Counterintelligence in any intelligence organization is obviously a key element for the simple reason that any Director of Central Intelligence is bound to be deeply concerned about the day that he may walk into the office and have someone tell him that a Soviet penetration has been found in the organization. This is obviously a Director's nightmare because in the tradition of intelligence, being penetrated by a hostile service is one of the real disasters. In other words, a man who is in a position to turn over your real intelligence secrets, your sources particularly, to a hostile service. This possibility that the service is penetrated, that there is a mole so-called in the service, is something that obviously should concern a Director very deeply. Therefore, Counter-intelligence, combined with the Office of Security, are the two elements to which one looks for protection against hostile penetration. Now let's leave the Office of Security aside in this discussion because I think that that is a separate chapter probably. The Counterintelligence Staff in my

view had two principal roles. One: to identify wherever possible what hostile services are doing, what agents they were using, and in turn attempting to protect the CIA from penetration by these hostile forces. The second big job was to ride, in a sense, sidecar with the positive intelligence operators who were recruiting agents and getting information through this device, to see to it that those agents were clean. In other words, that they were individuals that were really telling the truth (as they saw it) to their handlers or case officers in the CIA and were not double agents penetrating the CIA on behalf of some hostile service. Now those are two very important functions which the Counterintelligence Staff as I saw it was to perform.

In the first instance, the effort to keep foreign services from penetrating the Agency, I know a lot of work was done on interrogating defectors, working with other friendly security services in Britain, France, and so forth--in other words, performing that function with 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-weeks care.

Inside the CIA, the more controversial part of the CI Staff is the second element, where there is a normal and natural tension between the positive intelligence collector and the counterintelligence expert, who is wont to tell the positive intelligence collector that the agent he has just recruited is likely to be

working for some foreign intelligence organization and therefore, either he should be treated as a double agent or should be dropped. Now this tension sometimes creates, and has in the past created, real animosities. On the other hand, I don't know any way to run an intelligence organization properly without this kind of tension. The positive intelligence collector will say, "Look, we know whether the agent is on the level or not. We don't need these fellows in the Counterintelligence constantly worrying us and harassing us because they figure that the KGB has got that fellow and is running him into this and so forth." The counterintelligence fellows, on the other side, say the positive intelligence fellows fall in love with their agents, that they aren't careful enough in analysing the potential that that agent has for penetration or for being a double agent. So that here on the one hand the positive intelligence collector is told to go out and recruit agents. And here on the other hand the person in his own organization is telling him his recruitments are no good. I don't know any way to eliminate that tension. I think it's built into the process. To use an analogy in the law, it's very much like the cross-examination of a witness in a trial. If the prosecutor's witness is simply saying the things which the prosecutor has indicated he wants to hear, that

wouldn't be very good testimony if it were not for the fact that the defense attorney has an opportunity to cross-question that witness and challenge the statements he's made and point out in some cases to the judge and the jury that he might have lied or that he didn't have his facts straight or that there was some other element involved. That's the tension in the courtroom, and this is the tension in the intelligence business. And that was what I saw as the function of Counterintelligence. I realize that when I was Director some of the most difficult, in effect painful decisions I had to make were to resolve differences between the positive intelligence collector and the Counterintelligence Staff. But I figure that's one of the jobs that a Director is paid to do in the last analysis, to be the court of last appeal. If these are painful decisions, that's just too bad. One shouldn't change the system just because you have some pain with it. I think that covers essentially my feeling about this counterintelligence business.

Hathaway: Well, that's a good background for us to proceed. James Angleton, of course, is a key figure in the Agency throughout these years. Can you talk a bit about Angleton, about your relationship with him? Apparently you and he go back many years. What was his role in the Agency?

Helms: Yes. As a matter of fact, both Angleton and I were in the OSS. We also served in the SSU after the OSS was disbanded, and we worked together in the Clandestine Services of the CIA . . . well, I guess it must be for at least twenty years or more. Maybe it was twenty-five years. I don't know exactly but that's something one can figure out very easily from the calender. Angleton was taught by the British during World War II how to run double agents, how the British viewed counterintelligence work. He was an apt pupil, there was no doubt about it. He ran double agents in Italy for the OSS X-2. I believe he also continued to do so after the war. He worked in Rome for a time and established some extremely effective positive intelligence agents in Italy. When he came back to the United States, he continued his interest in other foreign intelligence organizations and particularly in counterintelligence. He developed some counterintelligence theories of his own which, I think, other services admired and believed that he was a first-class expert in this field, and he headed the Counterintelligence Staff for many years. To say that he was "beloved" by everybody in the Clandestine Service was not true, because he was severe, he had his own opinions, he held to them forthrightly. There were those who felt that he was wrong about some of these things. But then there's always controversy

swirling in these matters. As far as I was concerned, I always felt that I got along well with Angleton. I admired his abilities. I admired his tenacity and his intelligence, and I had him in the job in counterintelligence because I believed that he was the officer best fitted to do that job.

Hathaway: Admiral Taylor, before he died, was interviewed by some CI people in the late '70s who were doing some CI Staff studies, and we have transcripts of those interviews. Admiral Taylor says that he believed you--now he is speaking of you--he believed you felt that Golitsyn had somewhat soured Angleton, that because of Golitsyn Angleton had--and this is a quote from Admiral Taylor--"lost his perspective in matters concerning a possible penetration." Or he had--in another quote--"gone overboard in his suspicions." Does this accurately reflect your beliefs?

Helms: Well, [I think that the Golitsyn case indeed involves some controversy because Golitsyn has some rather extreme views about the relationship between the Soviet Union and the PRC, and the Soviet Union and some of its satellites. These views are now in the public domain in a book which Golitsyn has written and had published, and they're there for everybody to see. I don't happen to agree with Golitsyn or his views in these matters having to do with the Sino-Soviet split and political matters of this kind,

whereas I believe that Angleton does agree with Golitsyn. Now as far as our time in the Agency together was concerned, I did come to feel that Angleton went a little bit overboard in his acceptance of some of Golitsyn's views and some of Golitsyn's opinions. I thought he went a bit far with them. On the other hand, he is entitled to his opinion and I was entitled to mine.

I would have said, and I do say, that this idea that because Golitsyn believed that there was a penetration of the Agency did not necessarily make it so. I to this day do not believe that the CIA was penetrated, or has been penetrated, at any significant level. I'm not arguing now about contract agents in Washington who were doing spot jobs for the Agency who may have been recruited by the Soviets or may not have been recruited by the Soviets. I know there is some controversy that swirls around that. But I'm talking about staff members of the CIA who were working in the Clandestine Services or in the DDI in positions of responsibility where they would have been a useful penetration for the Soviets. I simply don't believe that ever happened, and I don't believe to this day that it ever happened. One would have to present me with the name and all the details about an individual before I would accept it because I just don't think it ever happened. I don't know what's happened since I

left in 1973; but up to that time I was persuaded that we were clean. So whatever Golitsyn or Nosenko or anybody else said, habeus corpus? Where is the man, who is the mole, so-called? I simply rest my case that I don't believe there ever was one, and I want to be quoted to that effect.]

Hathaway: Fair enough. I assure you, you will be. You talked a minute ago about some painful decisions in resolving some of these disputes between CI people and those who were involved in positive intelligence. Can you be a little bit more specific now, give us some concrete . . . ?

Helms: No, I can't, because I don't remember with great precision any more what the cases were that were in controversy. I don't think it would help this history for us to get down into the day-to-day running of an individual case. I just would rather leave it just the way I have stated it, because I realize it's good to have an example to demonstrate a principle that you're talking about. I could create an example very readily if I thought it desirable to do so, but I really don't think so. I think that it's sufficient to have stated it the way I do.

A different kind of matter involving a difficult decision or painful decision involves the Nosenko case. Since you wanted me to talk about that, let me make some mention of that now. There is a vast amount

of material on Nosenko that was produced as a result of the House Subcommittee on Assassinations. I imagine you have thousands of words about Nosenko.

Hathaway: Millions.

Helms: And so it isn't necessary for me to go on here and repeat what I have already said under oath and what I believe and so forth about the Nosenko case. But you are asking me about a difficult decision. In that case, to my mind, [the difficult decision was when I had to decide to end the interrogation of Nosenko, to resettle him on the American landscape, and just take our chances as to what he represented, whether he really was still working for the Soviets or whether he wasn't still working for the Soviets. I did not, in making that decision, intentionally make a judgment about the man's bona fides. I simply had on my hands a situation which had become intolerable--his incarceration down at "the Farm" and these various other things--that this case simply had to be cleaned up regardless of what his bona fides were, so I moved to clean it up. But I didn't like having to do it. I didn't like the sort of messiness that was involved in our not being able to decide distinctly that he was one thing or the other, at least in our best judgment. Therefore, I found this a difficult decision, and the things that went along with it--the amount of money we had to give him to get him

resettled and all the work that had to be done in this connection. I know that there are people, since then, who believe that Nosenko is OK. I gather he's been used in training courses at the Agency and a lot of things in recent years. I wasn't there and I don't want to talk about second-hand assertions. All I'm trying to do is to say that when I was faced with the decision, I never felt that I was given adequate evidence that the man was either clean or not clean. In other words, it was still muddy on the day that I finally said he must be resettled and must be got out of the Agency's hands.]

Hathaway: Let me here reassure you that we are not about to try to make that sort of determination either. We are interested in what Richard Helms knew, what was the basis of his actions. But we are in no way involved in trying to decide these types of matters. I've gone through the Nosenko documentation--of which as you suggested there's just tons and tons of material--fairly closely. I think I've got all the players. I think I understand the basic facts. There are a few questions marks that we might as well use this opportunity to clear up. I'm uncertain about the circumstances which led you to say to Admiral Taylor early in '67, "Would you please look into this so we can make a final determination." There's some indication that Howard Osborn talked to you about his

concerns, because apparently he was very concerned about this. There's some indication that Lawrence Houston talked with you about this as well. Do you have any recollection of either of these gentlemen coming to you and saying, "This is something . . ."?

Helms: I don't have any recollections at all in point of fact. But what you say makes eminent sense to me. It seems to me they are people that would come to me about this case. Because here we had held this man for this long period, if you want to put it this way, in durance vile. We had interrogated him. We had done everything that we knew how to do about him. And it was getting to a place where it was likely to turn into some sort of scandal if we didn't regularize his situation. I have no doubt that Osborn came to me, Houston came to me, and maybe others came to me. But certainly whatever the recommendations from various members of the staff were, they certainly convinced me that this was the moment to try to get this matter tidied up, and it seemed to me that Admiral Taylor was an admirable person to be put in charge of the examination of it because he came from outside the Agency and had no particular prejudices in the case one way or the other. And was a very fair-minded man.

Hathaway: And eventually did do the things that needed to get it cleared up.

Helms: Right.

Hathaway: So it turned out to be a good choice on your part. What about Leonard McCoy, Len McCoy? Other people have talked to him, not for this study per se, but about other studies having to do with Nosenko. Apparently he sent you several memoranda, out of channels. He also recalls talking to you on the telephone once or twice. Do you have any recollection of any input into this?

Helms: What was McCoy's role? Why is he . . . ?

Hathaway: McCoy was in SB Division, was very upset apparently by the way in which the Nosenko case was influencing SB Division's handling of all their cases, or virtually all their cases. He remembers sending you memoranda out of channels documenting his concerns about this. I was curious as to whether or not you recalled this, whether these had any impact.

Helms: No, but that doesn't mean anything, that I don't recall it.

Hathaway: I understand that. At one point there is some talk about using sodium amytal on Nosenko. You first of all OK this and then later on you reverse your decision and say, "No, we're not going to do this." Do you have any recollection of that?

Helms: Well, I have some vague recollection that I decided that I did not want to open this up to the accusation that we had used any drugs or any medicines or anything of that nature on Nosenko. In other words, I

believe I decided that this would be bad, that if it ever became public that we'd attempted to resolve this case by drugging the man, it would make a very bad public impression and even maybe a bad impression in the Congress. So I just decided to knock it off.

Hathaway: Before it was ever started.

Helms: Yeah. Before it was ever done.

Hathaway: Two documents I just ran across last week, I thought were revealing of your attitudes--if they in fact do reflect your attitudes. Both the documents were written by people in the CI Staff--not Angleton, but people right below Angleton. Both date from the time in which the Nosenko case is finally being resolved, the end of '68, early 1969. Both documents suggest that you were angered at the CI Staff for not documenting their case, not documenting their suspicions. They used phrases such as you "severely tasked" the CI Staff for not presenting its case against Nosenko better; you "rather tartly" criticized CI Staff. Do you remember these sorts of feelings?

Helms: Well, I don't remember those specific points. The only impression that I have of that particular period was that I was confronted with a very difficult decision and I did not feel that I was getting all the information I really needed to help me make the decision, and that therefore if I was, as you say, being tart and so forth, it was simply because I felt

that I wasn't getting the support I needed in terms of really cold facts and statements and so forth, which would help me to either go one way or the other. I think the fact that I ended up by not going one way or the other is because I never was entirely convinced one way or the other.

Hathaway: Is it possible, and this may appear a naive question, but is it possible that in a case such as this, those facts simply don't exist?

Helms: It's not only possible, but I think in this case you'll find out that that was exactly what happened. You see, in discussing in a staff way a matter of this kind, it's relatively easy for one person to say, "Well, based on the evidence we've seen, we just don't think this man is bona fide." Well, then you say to them, "Well, what are the things that you have assembled that indicate that he's not bona fide?" "Well, we just have a bad feeling about it. There's this and there's that." "Well, could you reduce it just to writing, for a memorandum?" I believe that it was this kind of a situation which was bothering me and where I was pressing them to "stop giving me your impressionistic feeling about this, I want the facts." It was an exasperating case, I must say.

Hathaway: And it still is in many respects. Looking back on this, SB Division controlled the case for a long time. It was really not a CI Staff case. The IG

makes a survey of SB Division during this period and concludes that there are some substantial problems in SB Division. Admiral Taylor recalls that he reported the same to you and also that there had to be some personnel changes made. Pete Bagley is removed as deputy chief of the Division when he's been there less than a year, leading me to at least wonder if this wasn't a premature removal. David Murphy is also removed as Division Chief and sent to Paris. Are all these things related? Particularly the personnel rotation?

Helms: I have no recollection of this. I'm sorry. You know, there were so many personnel changes that happened every day, or every week, or every month in the Agency that it has to be a pretty exceptional thing for me to remember. And I don't remember the IG report and I don't know what the problem was even. Or I don't remember if there was a problem. Bagley and Murphy are still available to you, I assume, and so you might be able to find out from them.

Hathaway: I'm talking to Murphy tomorrow and Bagley is in Europe.

Helms: Well, he comes here every once in a while.

Hathaway: Well, that answers my question though. At least it was not important enough to stand out in your mind.

. . . I want to talk a little bit about the
 case. Do you remember anything about that?

Helms: No, which case was this?

Hathaway: He is the KGB illegal who was arrested in [redacted]

[redacted] He was detained [redacted] for a couple of years and then returned to the Soviet Union in 1969. We had worked with [redacted] for a number of years, had become convinced that he was not bona fide, had [redacted] who then arrested him. Do you have any recollection at all of this case?

Helms: No. You might tell me the reason you're asking, but I don't . . . maybe that will trigger something in my mind but for some reason I don't take exception to anything you say. I'm sure there was a case like this but I don't remember the details.

Hathaway: This is one of the things I'm interested in. Many of these cases probably never even got to your desk. This one did, but it may have just been something that was mentioned in passing. The reason I ask is that it apparently came to your attention only at the very end, when the question became "what do we do with this guy?" He refused to confess. Eventually it came to a point where "we can't hold him indefinitely, [redacted] [redacted] But [redacted] took the attitude all along that "we're willing to do whatever you want to do." You sent the word out that this is really the [redacted] matter. "We're going to have a completely 'hands-off' approach." Then somewhere at the very end--and this is where it gets all murky, this is the reason for my questions--[redacted]

[redacted] apparently--and I underline "apparently" because I'm not positive--decided well, they would grant him asylum and resettle him there in [redacted] [redacted] Then a cable came from Headquarters, and not from your office--from somewhere lower down and I haven't been able to find out where--saying, "Absolutely not. This is intolerable. He'll talk to the press. He has to be returned to the Soviet Union." Eventually he was. There's still lingering controversy as to whether or not he was bona fide or not. So what I'm trying to determine is who sent that cable from Headquarters, who authorized it, and the reasons behind that, given your directive that we're going to take a "hands-off" approach. Doesn't ring a bell at all?

Helms: Is that the case that the [redacted] were writing about [redacted]

Hathaway: I had not picked that up if it were the case.

Helms: [redacted] [redacted] one newspaper, came out with a story about some Soviet defector and how long he had lived in secret [redacted] and so forth. I'm sure that it would be relatively easy to establish this from the State Department. They must have had some reporting on the matter one way or the other. I was interested to know if it was this case. You may be interested to look into it yourself. [redacted]

[REDACTED]

Hathaway: That's going to be easy enough to run down. No, I don't know anything about that. But I gather then that you really don't have any recollection of this?

Helms: No.

Hathaway: OK, good enough. Now I've got a list of other cases and again, I suspect you don't remember or may never . . .

Helms: Well, try them on me.

Hathaway: Right. There were two cases of Soviet KGB and GRU people in New York, [REDACTED]

Helms: Those were FBI cases, right?

Hathaway: Right. They were FBI cases. Angleton handled them for us, he was our liaison. They touched on the Nosenko case, they touched on Golitsyn. I was wondering whether you knew anything particular about those?

Helms: Well, I did know something about them at the time, but I believe they have gone on after my time. In other words, they didn't end at my time and I think the best thing for you to do is to get Angleton to straighten all that out for you.

Hathaway: If he will.

Helms: If you're not able to . . . strikes me that if Angleton isn't going to sit down and talk to you about these things, which is part of the Agency's historical record, I would recommend that Ken McDonald ask the

Director, Mr. Casey, to call Angleton and ask him to help out.

Hathaway: We may have to go that route. What about the defection of the daughter of Joseph Stalin? This comes during your period.

Helms: Right, what about that do you want to know?

Hathaway: I'm curious whether you were involved in that at all?

Helms: Yes, I was involved in that.

Hathaway: Can you relate your involvement?

Helms: When she defected in New Delhi--this is Svetlana--I believe that the then ambassador was Chester Bowles, and that he decided that she had to be handled by someone who could speak Russian in the [redacted] staff, and the only person that spoke Russian, I believe, was a CIA officer whose name now eludes me. In any event, it was decided to--by the Ambassador, I believe, essentially--that she would have to be got out of India. Arrangements were made to have this officer go with her [redacted] [redacted] where she would be held for a period until detailed arrangements could be worked out about bringing her to the United States. I believe it was in an afternoon that I got a call from Secretary of State Rusk, saying that he had just learned that she was being taken out of India, and that he wanted the whole operation halted. That he didn't want her to leave India, that he wasn't at all

sure that it was wise to try to bring her to the United States. Well, I said to him on the telephone that I was afraid it was too late for that, that I believed that she had already left New Delhi. In any event, when I hung up the telephone, I asked our communicators to open up a line to [redacted] [redacted] to find out if in fact she had left. It turns out that the plane on which she was riding had developed hydraulic trouble, and had been held up at the New Delhi airport, and was scheduled to leave at any time. So I must say that on that occasion--and this is something that I have never admitted to before, but I might as well be honest about it with history. I told them to keep the line open and to keep talking back and forth among communicators. In other words, I was using my authority as Director to tell the head of Communications downstairs to keep that line open so that the minute the plane took off I would be notified of it. And then I just stalled. In other words, rather than calling the Secretary of State back and saying "no, the plane hasn't left and we can stop it" and so forth, I just stalled because I thought he was making the wrong decision. I felt that in the circumstances it was important to get her out of India. In short, he and I disagreed and since he was not my boss--although I was bound obviously as Director to take into consideration his wishes,

particularly in a matter of this kind which involved foreign policy, and probably would have acceded to his wishes under 100, 90% of the circumstances--it seemed to me here that we had one of those strange situations in which I felt prepared and confident in the decision that I made to stall. So I did stall. So eventually the plane took off, I don't know, an hour later or so,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the problem then was how to get her into the United States. We had a meeting with Foy Kohler, who at that time was the senior Foreign Service Officer at the Department of State. I guess he was Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, I believe, at that time. Anyway, Kohler, in this meeting designed to try and figure out how to bring her to the United States and how to handle her in the United States, Kohler came up with a very sensible idea that we would have an American lawyer represent her, and bring her to the United States under his custody, and handle her relations with the press, with the public, and so forth. I believe the firm that was chosen to do this was . . . oh, it was a very well-known New York lawyer. Well, I'll have to think about that some more. I think his name was Greenberg but I'm not sure. And this was what I regard as a very astute suggestion on Kohler's part, because by employing a

lawyer, when Svetlana then did come to the United States the lawyers could control the press conference. In other words, as lawyers they could tell the press to get lost or that they could be searched or that they could only ask her this and they could not ask her that. In short, she was brought here; she was resettled; there was a minimum of diplomatic flap and fuss about the whole matter. The lawyers handled things extremely well. And she went on with life. I mean her later life and some of her problems in the United States are not part of this story. But that was the way she was brought to the United States and settled here.

Hathaway: I'm not sure I follow. What was the basis of State's reasoning that they didn't want her to leave India?

Helms: I don't know, you'll have to ask Secretary Rusk.

Hathaway: Rusk, I gather, never found out about your stalling?

Helms: Obviously not because I didn't tell him.

Hathaway: That's a good story. I, of course, had not heard that story before. That's a good story. . . . What about

[redacted]

[redacted]

led to the

expulsion of 105 Soviet nationals.

Helms: I never knew the case. The name doesn't mean anything to me.

Hathaway: What about the case we codenamed [redacted] Apparently someone called your house and said he would like to work in place with us?

Helms: You know, we're wasting time here now, Bob, because I don't have the details of those counterintelligence cases. I think that Scotty Miler and Ray Rocca and Jim Angleton have got to be thoroughly interrogated on these matters if you want to get into that kind of detail about these things.

Hathaway: All I want to know is . . . Probably these things didn't reach you except I know that this one called your house.

Helms: But in that particular case there was a call to my house by somebody, but the details now I've forgotten. They talked to my first wife and she in turn called me and I don't know what, who in the [?] was the person who put in the call. I've forgotten all that so that I'm really not very helpful. I just do know that I was in the takeoff on that because of this telephone call.

Hathaway: But the takeoff was it?

Helms: Well, I probably followed it for some time but how it came out I don't know.

Hathaway: One more case study and then that's all the specifics I've got for you. There has been periodically, particularly in the '60s, a hunt for moles or alleged moles. During this period in which you were Director, the finger for a time was placed on Subsequently he's been vindicated. Did this reach your level at all?

Helms: Yes, certainly.

Hathaway: Can you tell me a little about it?

Helms: I don't remember the details as to how it came about, but somebody was making allegations with respect to [redacted] I don't know about this any more. It's an absolute blank in my mind. I simply know that there were some allegations and I believe that they were looked into and investigated as carefully as one can do these things. The fact that [redacted] was vindicated, it seems to me, was probably the right answer. I never had any personal reason to suspect that he was working for the opposition. In fact, I always felt the contrary. But I don't remember any more where the allegations came from. But I had a policy with respect to, a personal policy with respect to people, staff members who were accused or where it was alleged that they might be in touch with a hostile service or be a double agent or something of this kind. And that was that I felt that we owed any staff man against whom allegations of this kind were made not only the fullest kind of examination but the fullest opportunity to clear himself if he could. I did not like a policy which had been, I believe, I don't know for how long, but at least under previous Directors, of getting rid of people because there were allegations. They couldn't be proven but the circumstantial case was such that it was better to get

them out of the organization than to keep them on. I felt that we owed them more than that, a better investigation, a more clear-cut decision one way or the other.

Hathaway: Sounds like Richard Helms the civil libertarian.

Helms: Well, it isn't so much a question of being a civil libertarian as it's just honest-to-God fairness with respect to people with whom you'd worked, whom you had assumed were as dedicated as you were to the work of the Agency and that to have them smeared when sometimes there was no real basis for this was unfair, and I wanted to see justice done. At least as imperfect as human justice can be. I wanted to at least satisfy myself that I wasn't simply being swept along by somebody who didn't like the man, or who had an odd beat in his head or felt that the chain of circumstantial evidence was so persuasive that it had to be proved. I just didn't like those things.

Hathaway: Well, if you'll permit me to say so, that's why Richard Helms is so well-liked and respected in the Agency as he is.

Helms: Thank you.

Hathaway: That concludes my questions but before we cut it off, let me ask one more. What else should I have asked you about defectors, about penetration of us or of other western services?

Helms: There is only one other comment that I think I might

make here. Defectors and even to a greater extent, agents in place like Popov and Penkovsky were very important to the Agency, particularly in the '50s and early '60s, because in those days our information about the Soviet Union was very sparse indeed. It wasn't until the technical collection devices came--

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TAPE I - SIDE II

Helms: It wasn't until the technical collection devices--overhead photography, ELINT, and various other of these technical means--permitted us to develop a vast body of information about the Soviet military buildup and the Soviet military machine. So we regarded defectors in those days of the late '40s, '50s and early '60s as being a very important element in informing us about the Soviet military, Soviet politics, Soviet economics, Soviet life. I think on occasion perhaps the testimony of some of these defectors was not as accurate as it might be. In some cases they may have tried to gull us. We may have gone too strong on some of the leads that they came up with. Maybe in some cases the establishment of bona fides was not as carefully done as it might have been. I don't have examples to go with each of those items; it's just my general impression that this could readily have happened during those years. But certainly we learned a lot from defectors. Difficult as they were to handle, and particularly difficult to resettle, because Soviet citizens simply do not resettle well in the United States . . . suddenly being put down in a free society where they can move any place they like and their life is not patterned

for them and they don't have to march to a certain drummer . . . they're not very successful usually, and we've had a lot of trouble in resettling defectors. But on balance I would say that Soviet defectors have been a big help to US intelligence, particularly in telling us about their own country, about their own service and how the KGB and the GRU operate, and giving us some insights which we would not have been able to get in any other way.

Hathaway: Good. Well, I thank you, Sir.

END OF INTERVIEW