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SERIAL: PM1601095592
PASS: COPY TO UD
COUNTRY: CIS
SUBJ: EX-KGB COLONEL 'DEMOLISHES' KALUGIN POW STORY
SOURCE: MOSCOW IZVESTIYA IN RUSSIAN 11 JAN 92 MORNING EDITION P4
TEXT:

//((CORRESPONDENT VLADIMIR SKOSYREV REPORT: "KGB SECRETS BECOME COMMERCIAL"))

((TEXT)) IF ANYONE DOUBTS THAT WE ARE BECOMING MORE CIVILIZED, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY RETIRED KGB COLONEL OLEG NECHIPORENKO ON 9 JANUARY. EVEN THE DOUBTING THOMASES AMONG US WOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT RETIRED INTELLIGENCE WORKERS AT HOME AND ABROAD ARE FEARLESSLY SUPPLYING JOURNALISTS WITH INFORMATION ON SECRET MATTERS AND, MOREOVER, STILL REFUTING STATEMENTS BY THEIR SUPERIOR OFFICERS (ALSO RETIRED, OF COURSE).

IN THIS CASE, THE SUPERIOR OFFICER IN QUESTION WAS NONE OTHER THAN OLEG KALUGIN. AS WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED, HE HAS CLAIMED IN SEVERAL INTERVIEWS WITH U.S. TELEVISION COMPANIES THAT KGB PERSONNEL QUESTIONED (OR INTERROGATED) THREE U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR IN VIETNAM IN 1978, I.E. FIVE YEARS AFTER HANOI SAID IT HAD RELEASED ALL PRISONERS. THIS FEATURE OF THE INTERVIEWS HAS EXCITED U.S. PUBLIC OPINION MOST OF ALL.

COLONEL NECHIPORENKO COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED GENERAL KALUGIN'S STORY. FIRST, THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN 1973, RATHER THAN 1978 -- IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS ON INDOCHINA. SECOND, HE HAD ONLY TALKED TO ONE AMERICAN IN HANOI -- HE WORKED AT THE CIA RESIDENCE IN THE CITY OF DA NANG AND SPECIALIZED IN THE SOVIET UNION.

ACCORDING TO THE COLONEL, THE MEETING ORGANIZED BY "VIETNAMESE FRIENDS" WAS NOT WITHOUT ITS HUMOROUS SIDE. THE VIETNAMESE INTRODUCED HIM TO THE AMERICAN AS A MEMBER OF STAFF OF AN EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY'S FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE AMERICAN SAW THROUGH THIS SUBTERFUGE, ALTHOUGH HE GAVE NO SIGN. THE CONVERSATION, WHICH LASTED BETWEEN TWO AND TWO AND A HALF HOURS, WAS FOLLOWED BY A LUNCH BREAK. NATURALLY, THE COLONEL WAS EAGER TO CONTINUE, BUT DISAPPOINTMENT AWAITED HIM. THE VIETNAMESE INFORMED HIM THAT THE "CONTACT HAD REFUSED ANOTHER MEETING."

CONSEQUENTLY, HE HAD TO GIVE THE LIST OF QUESTIONS PREPARED IN MOSCOW TO HIS "FRIENDS," SO THAT THEY COULD PUMP THE INFORMATION OUT OF THE AMERICAN. REFERENCE INFORMATION -- MAINLY CONFIRMING WHAT THE KGB ALREADY KNEW -- WAS EVENTUALLY OBTAINED FROM AN ENEMY SPY HELD PRISONER FOR FIVE YEARS.

A U.S. JOURNALIST AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE TRIED TO FIND OUT THE NAME OF THE PRISONER. NECHIPORENKO REPLIED THAT WASHINGTON ALREADY KNOWS THE PRISONER'S IDENTITY AND THAT IT COULD NOT BE REVEALED TO JOURNALISTS FOR REASONS OF "PROFESSIONAL SOLIDARITY."

O. KALUGIN HAS NOT BEEN OVERLY WORRIED BY THESE CONSIDERATIONS -- NOT SO MUCH IN HIS ATTITUDE TO HIS FORMER RIVALS AS WITH REGARD

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TO HIS FORMER COMRADES. THE RETIRED GENERAL HAS NOT STOOD ON CEREMONY WHEN ASSESSING HIS FORMER COLLEAGUES. SO WHAT PROMPTED HIM TO MAKE HIS DISCLOSURES? THAT QUESTION, THE COLONEL SMILED, WOULD BE BEST ANSWERED BY THE MEDICS. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE GENERAL BEING BROUGHT BEFORE AN OFFICERS' COURT OF HONOR.

THE SUBJECT OF THE U.S. PRISONERS' INTERROGATION COULD PROBABLY BE CONSIDERED CLOSED, IF IT WERE NOT FOR ONE STRIKING COINCIDENCE: ON THE VERY DAY NECHIPORENKO GAVE HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, A RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A JOINT COMMISSION OF THE RUSSIAN PARLIAMENT AND U.S. CONGRESS TO INVESTIGATE THE REPORTS ABOUT U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR. ONE WONDERS WHY THIS COMMISSION IS BEING SET UP IF THERE WERE NO FURTHER CONTACTS WITH U.S. SERVICEMEN.

HAVING ACHIEVED INSTANT FAME AS A RESULT OF THE EPISODE IN VIETNAM, O. NECHIPORENKO KEPT A MODEST SILENCE ABOUT HIS OTHER BRUSH WITH HISTORY -- HIS MEETINGS WITH LEE HARVEY OSWALD, FUTURE ASSASSIN OF U.S. PRESIDENT KENNEDY. HOWEVER, JOURNALISTS QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT THIS TOO. THE COLONEL WAS CHARY WITH THE DETAILS. HE ADMITTED THAT HE AND TWO KGB COLLEAGUES MET OSWALD TWICE AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN MEXICO IN 1963, APPROXIMATELY TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION.

WHAT DID THEY TALK ABOUT? THE OSWALD CASE REMAINS A STAIN ON WORLD HISTORY, AND NECHIPORENKO HAS PROMISED TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT. HOWEVER, ANYONE WHO WANTS TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY TALKED ABOUT WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO PAY: THIS MATERIAL IS A "COMMERCIAL SECRET" OF THE COLONEL AND HIS TWO COLLEAGUES.

SUCH A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO WORLD HISTORY HAS TO BE ADMIRER. AS WE CAN SEE, RETIRED KGB STAFFERS ARE INCREASINGLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT ADOPTING THE NORMS OF CONDUCT WIDESPREAD AMONG THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE WEST. NEVERTHELESS, THE QUESTION REMAINS: IS IT RIGHT TO USE SECRET INFORMATION OBTAINED IN STATE SERVICE FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES?

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