

Kwaśniewski from 1

likewise rendered the politician open to the post-Soviet Russian blackmail and, hence, potentially, anti-American attitudes. After all, at least until 1989, the politician from Warsaw served Moscow as a secret agent.

The vetting

When, in 1995, Kwaśniewski became Poland's post-Communist president, he had to fill out an affidavit stating that he had not served or been an agent of the secret police. He perjured himself.

According to the right-wing weekly Voice (Głos), the internal security service (Urząd Ochrony Państwa (UOP) -- Office for the Defense of the State) under Poland's "Solidarity" government turned Kwaśniewski's file over to the courts in August 2000. This was to be the post-Communist sitting president's lustration (vetting). In September 2000, the court determined that the material available indeed concerned Kwaśniewski. The court further determined that Kwaśniewski was registered as an agent of the secret police, the Security Service (SB, Służba Bezpieczeństwa). However, no records were found regarding his specific activities as an agent. All pertinent documents appeared to have been destroyed. Therefore the court decided that it could be claimed that Kwaśniewski did not perjure himself in his affidavit. This was an innocent verdict by default. Thus, the post-Communist judges once again cleared one of their own, according to the Christian-nationalist Our Daily (Nasz Dziennik).

Documents Surface

Soon after the "trial", however, more documents regarding Kwaśniewski were found. The UOP released a Communist secret police report from the Seoul Olympics (1988). According to the report, there were secret agents in "the strict leadership" of the Polish Olympic team. In fact, there were 5 agents listed out of 7 persons who constituted "the strict leadership." The head of the leadership was the then-Communist minister of sport, Aleksander Kwaśniewski.

In fact, many more documents have been located to implicate the politician. To appreciate the Benedictine effort of the researchers and archivists, a few words on methodology are warranted. Much of what follows is available in a very recently published monograph, edited by Dr. Filip Musiał of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, "Regarding the Secret Police Files: Methodological and Research Problems" (Wokół teczek bezpieki: Zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłoznawcze, Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006).

The Security Service of Poland periodically purged its archives of certain categories of documents. But the greatest massacre of the records took place between January and April of 1990, well after the so-called "free" elections of June 1989 and the alleged "fall of communism." An estimated 70 percent of all Communist secret police reports were destroyed under the glazed eyes of the liberal Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a left-wing Solidarity appointee.

However, the remaining documents, which are stored by the Institute of National Remembrance, can sometimes suffice to establish some basic facts, and sometimes even the gory details, of the activities of the net of agents, the agentura. This is possible because of the Byzantine system of record keeping by the SB.

The only person who knew a Communist agent was his direct handler, his immediate superior, and the internal affairs vetting inspector, who checked periodically whether agent registration was real and whether all procedures were followed. Even the SB record keepers were not privy to information about an agent's identity (see below). After 1989 only a few Communist secret policemen decided to come clean and reveal their agent net. Nonetheless, few agents have been identified this way. Most were not. But they can't sleep in peace anymore.

Before 1989, each time a secret police officer received or wrote a report, he was obligated to identify each person and object (building or institution) mentioned in the

report and insert a copy of the report into the separate files of each person or object referenced. This way not only the original of the report was kept but also its multiple copies.

Further, sometimes secret police reports could be misfiled with regular court records. This was the case with the notorious Major Adam Humer, a chief Stalinist torturer, who destroyed all his records, save for a misplaced copy of his own report describing how he murdered an underground journalist. This bureaucratic mistake allowed for the secret policeman to be tried and sentenced to jail after 1989.

There are also secret police records in the regular criminal police archive. For example, abstractly speaking, if the vice squad of Warsaw was unable to catch a serial rapist, the criminal police would ask the secret police for assistance. The former usually would supply the latter with agent reports from the areas where the rapist was active. And so a secret police agent would share his insights about his neighborhood. At all times the agent's identity would remain anonymous to the criminal police. However, it was often possible to identify the agent because the report would contain his codename, his registration number, and even, albeit much less frequently, his general address (no apartment number).

Additionally, agent identity can be established by juxtaposing the contents of secret police card catalogues. There are two main types: a name catalogue and a call number catalogue. Secret police archivists who were assigned to service the former were not allowed access to the latter. However, they destroyed both catalogues partly. Some cards were individually removed. Most cards were dumped and mixed up. This meant that the individual records of the agentura and its handlers were freely combined with these of their victims. The secret police archivists also destroyed the key to the catalogue system and, essentially, refused to share the knowledge about it with their successors. However, the archivists of the Institute of National Remembrance have been able to restore the catalogues from scratch. Now, one can more easily try to match the names with the registration numbers.

It is now also less complicated to understand the numbers and symbols on unrelated documents without the agent registration records. Take the files regarding weapon permits.

Poland had a total ban on weapons under communism. More precisely, the military, secret police, and top party people were permitted weapons. Regular Poles were not. However, each weapons permit had to be issued individually based upon the decision of a local secret police commander. The permit sheet included the following rubrics: the name, date of birth, place of birth, address, weapon type, remarks, and legal basis (podstawa prawna) of the decision. Usually, the authority granting the permit would invoke an innocuous sounding paragraph of the Communist law. Occasionally, however, under the rubric "legal basis" there would be written, say, 72204, an agent registration number. It would then be possible to match the name in the weapons permit against the name catalogue in the agent registration section, and the registration number against the number catalogue or any of the many extant copies of agent reports containing the registration number and the codename, and the identity of the agent would quickly become clear.

Next, individual files have been recovered by the IPN and the new Polish secret services both by recovery from the former Communist secret policemen and by declassifying records kept elsewhere by related institutions, most notably military intelligence.

Also, there is a multi-level password-protected master computer list of the agentura. The endeavor to decipher it is well advanced.

Last but not least, a master copy of all registered agents is in Moscow. The official denials by the Kremlin notwithstanding, this can be argued by analogy with other Soviet Block services, the East German Stasi in particular. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a Stasi officer liaison delivered the master

copy of the register to the Soviets but made another copy and sold it to the United States. It took a decade of begging for the German government to receive some records from the copy, which is deposited with the CIA.

Now that it has finally vetted its intelligence services, Warsaw should urgently approach Washington to ask for the secret police records from Poland. When it does, it can officially confirm what the researchers at the Institute of National Remembrance have found in disparate files.

Agent "Alek"

According to his file, Aleksander Zdzisław Kwaśniewski, codenamed "Alek," was first registered by the SB on June 23, 1982. This was a preliminary registration under the "secured" (zaba) category. That meant that the target was approached and investigated to determine whether he could be recruited. On June 29, 1983, Kwaśniewski's registration was changed to secret collaborator/agent (TW, tajny współpracownik). His secret police registration number was 72204. His secret police card catalogue sequential registration number was 4645. Kwaśniewski's case officer was Captain Wytrwał. The agent was originally registered by Section XIV (Wydział XIV) of the II Department (counterintelligence) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) in Warsaw. On December 3, 1983, the agent was shifted to Section VII of the III Department, which infiltrated and controlled the media. The agent was de-registered on September 9, 1989. This marks the official date of the termination of his relationship with the secret police of Communist Poland.

However, in the mid-1990s allegations surfaced that Kwaśniewski was a Russian agent codenamed "Executioner" (Kat). It was further alleged that Executioner met with his handler, ex-KGB officer Vladimir Alganov, outside of Gdańsk in August 1993. When the allegations became public, the post-Communist courts predictably cleared Kwaśniewski of meeting with Alganov. The court however focused on this single occasion in August 1993. The crucial "evidence" of Kwaśniewski's innocence was supplied in the form of credit card receipts and bank operation records which purported to show that Kwaśniewski was in Ireland at the time of the alleged meeting. The bank records were made available by BIG (now Millenium) Bank, which is run by a post-communist kleptocrat, Bogusław Kot.

In other words, this and other cases of alleged espionage remain open before the court of public opinion. It will remain so for a while. The attempts to allow the public access to the Kwaśniewski secret police file have so far been defeated.

An Apparatchik

An important facet of collaborating with the Communist secret police was that the SB was intimately involved in creating communist Poland's elite. Cooperate and you would be rewarded. Refuse and you would be punished: denied a job, a promotion, a foreign scholarship, a passport to travel abroad, or a special coupon for consumer goods unavailable to regular citizens. Your children would be barred from the university. And that was the minimum punishment. Resist actively and you would be imprisoned or even killed. Collaborate and denounce your family, friends, and neighbors and you would reap the bountiful rewards. This was the standard method of negative selection of the Polish elite between 1944 and 1989. And Kwaśniewski was one of the principal beneficiaries of the system.

In 1977, he joined the Communist Party while a university student in Gdańsk. He never graduated but claimed until recently that he had a master's degree. At the time of his registration as a secret police agent Kwaśniewski was a Communist youth activist and the editor-in-chief of a student weekly, called Etc (ItD). Accordingly, he was assigned to inform on fellow journalists. He must have pleased his superiors. In 1984 he was promoted to head the party's daily Youth Banner (Sztandar Młodych). Between 1985 and 1987 Kwaśniewski served the minister of sports and youth. He was also put in charge of the Polish Olympic Committee. Further, from 1987 through 1990, Kwaśniewski headed

the Committee for Youth and Physical Culture. During his tenure at the committee, about \$100 million disappeared. In March 2006, belatedly, the Public Prosecutor's Office launched an official investigation into the matter.

A Democrat Rises

Meanwhile, Kwaśniewski had enjoyed a stellar career in post-1989 Poland. First, he was one of the leading lights of the post-Communist Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SDRP) and, then, the Union of the Democratic Left (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej), both avatars of the transformed Communist party. Finally, in 1995, he was elected to the nation's presidency. Having won reelection in 2000, Kwaśniewski completed his second term as President in 2005.

After the "fall" of Communism in 1989, Kwaśniewski quickly reinvented himself as a liberal democratic politician. First, while retaining his Moscow links through his erstwhile comrades, he established contact with the United States. In the summer of 1989, when the first Solidarity-led (but Communist dominated) government was established, agent "Alek" invited U.S. Ambassador John Davis out to lunch. "I am the opposition now," he told him, successfully wooing the American. Kwaśniewski continued networking suavely. As a result, Bill Clinton sent him public relations advisors and other assistance, which greatly assisted his narrow victory over Lech Wałęsa in the presidential elections of 1995.

More importantly, however, Kwaśniewski won because there had been no de-Communization, no vetting of former agents, and no coming to grips with Poland's totalitarian past. The post-Communists were able to pose as liberal democrats. Their flip-floping was routine and brazen. To illustrate, in the early 1990s Kwaśniewski was quoted by centrist paper Republic (Rzeczpospolita) as saying he had joined the Communists because: "My leftist views to a large extent were shaped under the influence of the evil, primitive propaganda of [Radio] Free Europe. Its bias upset me so that it pushed me toward the left." A few years later, however, Kwaśniewski swore that "Radio Free Europe shaped me to a large extent. In a certain sense, if it had not been for them, I would have not become a man of the Left. My father listened to Radio Free Europe all the time."

This can be dismissed as the sort of routine lies that even truly democratic U.S. politicians sometimes resort to. But that would be mirror imaging. The extent of Kwaśniewski's involvement in shady deals puts to shame many an embezzling U.S. politician, if only in terms of the relative value of the loot. Poland is a very poor country. Naturally, the scandalous dealings of agent "Alek" and his comrades have often been denied and, until recently, Polish legal authorities routinely refused to deal with them.

The Snafus

Here's a short list of Kwaśniewski's snafus over the years as reported in various sources, including the leftist Electoral Gazette (Gazeta Wyborcza), centrist Republic, populist Daily (Dziennik) and the right-wing Our Daily.

1. In 1995, when he was about to be elected as post-Communist president, it was revealed that Kwaśniewski had falsified his tax return. He "forgot" to mention that his wife, Jolanta, held stock in a publicly traded insurance company and made about \$15,000 per year on it (an average monthly salary in Poland was about \$200 at that time).
2. Also at that time (October and November 1995), Kwaśniewski perjured himself while filing an affidavit with the federal electoral commission. In addition to denying his involvement with the Communist secret police, he also falsely claimed that he had graduated from the University of Gdańsk with a master's degree. He then repeated the boast to Polish and foreign media (the last time to the Frankfurter Rundschau on Nov. 24, 1995). This is a significant point because in his campaign against Lech Wałęsa Kwaśniewski claimed to be "an educated man." After his electoral victory,