Cloak and dagger spying alive and well

United Press International

"There are roughly 27 independent states in Europe. Each has an army and an air force and most have some sort of navy as well. For its own security, each of those armies, air forces and navies must know what each corresponding force of the other 26 is doing — what its strength is, what its efficiency is, what secret preparations it is making. That means spies. Armies of them," writes Eric Ambz, author of "The Mask of Demitrios."

Hardly a month passes without a real life James Bond story surfacing somewhere. Consider:

— November, 1979: The Soviet naval attache in Paris is quietly expelled for showing too much interest in French nuclear submarines.

— December, 1979: Stig Bergling, 42, gets life in jail for spying for Russia within the Swedish defense establishment — a classic "mole" using microdots, invisible ink, all the favorites of fiction.

— February, 1980: Soviet diplomat Guenadi Traoko, 47, is picked up in Marseilles, France, with secret papers concerning a new top-secret fighter plane.

— Five days later and a country away Oleg Soranov, 42, manager in Spain for the Soviet airline Aeroflot, is forceably put on a Moscow-bound plane after buying plans for aviation electronics from a Spanish intelligence undercover agent.

— March, 1980: FBI officials unveil Rudolph A. Herrmann as a double agent, a high-ranking Soviet spy in the United States induced to turn the tables and reveal to the Americans the latest Soviet espionage techniques.

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Most of these cases were no big deal. Chances are you heard little of most of them.

Only the big ones make news. A Sir Anthony Blunt, art advisor to Britain's Queen Elizabeth, revealed as a one-time Soviet spy. Or a mass expulsion like Sweden's December deportation of 24 Poles whose "route maps" for selling art prints door to door were curiously detailed about military installations.

Spying is routine today.

Every country does it. Everybody knows it. South Korea arrests nine alleged North Korean spies and 15 accomplices, as it did Aug. 9, and everybody yawns.

Yet a wide-ranging United Press International survey indicates spying is a boom business these days.

Spying itself may or may not be increasing fast. By the secret nature of the business, nobody knows. But exposures of spying, the spies who fail the first duty of espionage — not to get caught — certainly are increasing.

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Today or tomorrow, when the next spy case breaks, consider this:

In great secrecy, 80 Egyptian spies are smuggled into Aleppo, Syria, in a ploy straight out of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" — each spy bottled in a great earthenware jar, one on each side of 40 donkeys.

Their spymaster was Thutmosis III. He was Pharoah of Egypt 15 centuries before Christ.

Even he inherited an ancient tradition. When Egypt's Pharoah Menes formed Egypt's first police force 5,000 years ago, one of its specific duties was to combat espionage. The Bible says Moses sent spies into the Land of Canaan.

Consider the famous names since then: Nathan Hale, Mata Hari, "Cicero," Klaus Fuchs, Oleg Penkovsky, Burgess and Maclean — and Kim Philby. Today's exposed spies seem small beer by comparison.

In broad daylight, on a crowded London street near Waterloo station, a stranger jostled Bulgarian exile Georgi Markov, 49. Markov died. An autopsy removed from his thigh a metal pellet.... The pellet had held a rare poison twice as deadly as cobra venom.

Many of them seem to borrow their tricks from ever popular spy fiction.

A favorite ploy of the Bond breed is to seduce a pretty secretary and get her to steal secrets, right? An East German spy did just that in Denmark last year.

Fictional spymasters always worm a "mole" into enemy ranks to burrow from within, right? Eli Cohen was planted within the top ranks of Syria's government and sent coded radio messages packed with top-secret information to his Israeli masters until the Syrians caught and hanged him.

Microdots? Witness Sweden's "mole" Bergling mentioned earlier. Kidnapping? How about Kim Dae Jung, who once ran for the presidency of South Korea, snatched in Tokyo and dragged back to Seoul.

Fictional secret services are forever "taking out" or "wasting" defectors. And what ever did happen to Kim Hyung Wook?

Kim once was chief of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency. The KCIA's estimated 300,000 spies make it one of the world's most active spy centers, called by a former U.S. ambassador to Seoul "a state within a state, a vast shadowy world of ... bureaucrats, intellectuals, agents and thugs."

Kim defected to the United States, spilled the "Koreagate" business, then went to Paris to write a book about the KCIA. One day last October, leaving his luggage behind, he walked out of his Paris hotel. He has not been seen since.

When the real spy world gets dirty it can be as chilling as anything John le Carre ever wrote.

In broad daylight, on a crowded London street near Waterloo station, a stranger jostled Bulgarian exile Georgi Markov, 49. Markov died. An autopsy removed from his thigh a metal pellet smaller than a pinhead. The pellet had held a rare poison twice as deadly as cobra venom.

A similar case was reported in Paris the same year. A month later another Bulgarian exile in London, Vladimir Simeonov, was found dead at the foot of his bedroom stairs. He might have fallen, and he might not.

Another mystery? Last March 17 a Spanish employee of Aeroflot returned to Madrid from his first visit to Russia. Two days later he was found dead in his parked car. The only mark on him was a small cut at the back of his knee.

In the popular mind the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad is rated the world's best, perhaps with such exploits as the raid on Entebbe in mind.

In the real intelligence world everyone has a different "best." Some professionals rate the Russians, West Germans and English as 1, 2, 3. Others put the East Germans at the top, with the Russians a close second. In most lists Russia is right up there.

"Roughly 80 percent of Soviet diplomats belong to the KGB," said a French intelligence source. "However, this does not necessarily mean they are all involved in spying."

China must be a target for everybody's spies. But spy stories never surface from China. Either its counterespionage people are superb or there's complete censorship.

Fish gardens suggested as alternate food source

United Press International

NORFOLK, Va. — In the backyard gardens of America, amidst tomato plants and berry patches, Dr. Anthony Provenzano envisions a new food crop — one that is high in protein, low in fat, and swims.

"A fish garden — that's what we're talking about," said Provenzano, who is trying to refine an efficient and easy way for the average family to grow its own fish.

The Old Dominion University professor works in a makeshift greenhouse lined with 15 plastic pools. He began experiments last spring and hopes to reel in the answers within a few years.

"There's no doubt in my mind it can be done," said the 45-year-old oceanographer, who mulled over the idea for years before launching the effort with a handful of students.

"We want high yield, low cost and good reliability," he said. "We want the fish garden to work with the vegetable garden. The fish would be fed, to a large extent, vegetable scraps."

Provenzano believes there is a ready-made market for the fish garden — families squeezed by soaring food costs and concerned about chemicals in processed foods.

"During the past few years, there's been a tremendous amount of interest by the American public about increasing self-sufficiency," he said in an interview.

"More and more people are gardening. The fish garden would be a natural extension. People could grow their own fish — pollution free."

Backyard fish gardening has been practiced for centuries in Europe and Asia, but with fish being raised primarily in natural or man-made ponds.

Because most Americans don't have land for a pond, Provenzano is seeking a way to raise fish in a huge aquarium-type setting — possibly plastic swimming pools.

His goal is a do-it-yourself plan in which an aquarium could be built and equipped for under $500 and fish harvested for "well under $1 per pound."

Provenzano plans to apply for federal grants, ranging from $10,000 to $30,000.