

Army Intelligence—I

Grow's Diary Incident Brings to Light Misassignments of Military Attaches

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

Once again the Army has closed the barn door after the horses have been stolen.

Its order last week, paralleled by one from the Air Force, prohibiting military attaches and Army personnel overseas from keeping dairies was a belated and feeble attempt to rectify fundamental errors in the Army's approach to the collection and evaluation of intelligence information.

But, unless this futile order is followed by much more basic reforms, no major improvement in the deterioration of what was a good intelligence service during World War II can be expected. The diary order stemmed from what is now the famous and unfortunate, "Grow case," an incident that will probably be discussed in intelligence circles with anger, impatience, or humor for years to come.

Maj.-Gen. Robert W. Grow, until recently United States military attaché to Moscow, and an officer with a fine World War II record in command of armor, is, deservedly, the "goat" of this one, but the larger share of the blame must be shouldered by G-2 (Intelligence) and by the Army itself.

General Grow, a fire-eating type with very decided opinions that he is not slow to voice, violated a kindergarten principle of intelligence by keeping, during his Moscow duty, a compromising diary, which not only urged war against the Soviet Union, but also recorded with exactitude the general's observations in Moscow, his talks with other attaches and observers, his various "contacts" and his dislike for the United States Ambassador.

Left Diary in His Room

Then, to compound his indiscretion he left his diary in his room in a Frankfurt (Germany) hotel, while there on a visit, a nursery-school violation of security. Someone pilfered and photographed it (before returning it) and the Communists are using it with some effect in both propaganda and intelligence.

About the only hopeful note, as one of General Grow's fellow officers said, is that the diary, which displayed little erudition and less information, "might damn well confuse the Russians."

As a result of this miscue, General Grow was recalled from Moscow, along with a bevy of others whom he compromised; the unfortunate general has been linked unfairly by the Russians with their germ warfare propaganda campaign, and his scalp has been demanded by the Connecticut Council of Churches and by all and sundry.

But nobody seems to have asked why a man like General Grow was in Moscow at all, and nobody seems to have laid the blame where it squarely belongs—on the Army policies that permitted and encouraged the placing of a square peg in a round hole. General Grow has major military usefulness, but the peculiar attributes required by a military attaché are not among his talents.

The most important military attaché post in the world, Moscow, has twice now been bestowed upon good, two-fisted, tough fighting men, with no other qualifications whatsoever for the job. Maj. Gen. John W. ("Iron Mike") O'Daniel (now a lieutenant general, commanding the First Corps in Korea) was General Grow's predecessor. Some of his personal reports drew some rather sweeping conclusions from the shabby appearance of the buildings in Moscow, the slowness of the trains and the dress of the people.

Excelled As Combat Officer

General O'Daniel possessed one of the finest combat records of any division commander in World War II. Later he commanded the Infantry School with credit, and he deserves well of his country, as did General Grow, until he embarrassed it by his unfortunate carelessness. But the qualifications of either of these officers for the difficult job of military attaché are veiled in mystery. Neither were experts on Russia; neither had made military intelligence their specialty.

If Moscow were the only post so distinguished by the Army the result, though bad, might not be disastrous. But there have been repeated instances in the years since the war of major misassignments in military attaché posts. Some attaches have been outright failures; many have been exceedingly weak.

Two attaches in an Eastern Eur-

capitals, particularly its younger assistant attaches, some of whom are "live wires," and there are many competent men in G-2 in Washington.

But there have been enough cases of misassignment, like that of General Grow, to mar the record seriously and to reduce materially the utility of Army intelligence. And it is clear that the fine intent that motivated the post-war re-establishment of our attaches system has now been negated, by, among other reasons, the "spoils" system of Army politics.

opean country after the war, were notorious, one for his convivial habits, the other for selling on the black market some excess clothing he had brought. One major general, who during the war was head of G-2, was recalled from his post as military and air attaché in London four years ago for investigations of charges dealing with alleged black market activities.

Quite recently a military attaché in a key Asiatic country had to be recalled because of the damage he was doing his nation. Two years ago in another Asiatic country the incompetence of virtually all of our attaches was a matter of common gossip in the capital of that country.

Vital Intelligence Link

Attaches are only one link in an intelligence service, but they are an important link. They are, moreover, more than intelligence "agents"; they are diplomatic representatives who should represent their country with tact, distinction, dignity and "brains."

They are, or they should be, an ambassador's military aides, but many of them in the post-war years, have viewed the Foreign Service and the State Department with ill-disguised contempt and have made themselves virtually independent of the Ambassadors under whom they should work.

Personality and prestige frictions have sometimes caused almost open "squabbles" between various representatives of the United States Government in foreign capitals, and there have been times when the military, defying the tradition of civilian supremacy, have gotten too big for their boots and have virtually tried to run the show.

These criticisms are not, of course, universal; the Army has many good attaches in foreign