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# The Mole Who Gave Away Russia's Spies

By Yulia Latynina

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During his visit to Ukraine on Saturday, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin told journalists that he met with the 10 Russian "illegals" — who pleaded guilty in a U.S. court to being agents for the Russian government — at some point after they arrived in Moscow on July 9.

"They will find decent work — I'm sure," Putin said. "I don't doubt that they will have interesting, bright lives." Perhaps he was referring to Anna Chapman, who has already received an offer from Vivid Entertainment to play the leading role in a porn film.

"I can tell you that it was a hard fate for each of them," Putin said. "First, they had to master a foreign language as their own."

Here, Putin was clearly exaggerating their English-language skills. Nina Khrushcheva, professor of international affairs at The New School in New York, was the academic supervisor of Richard Murphy — one of the spies whose real name is Vladimir Guryev. She wrote in Foreign Policy magazine about how she did a double-take when she met this supposedly Irish-American student with a strong Russian accent. Plus, he had that insolent, downtrodden

demeanor that screams, “I was raised in Russia!”

But the most important open question is who was the informer who helped U.S. authorities uncover the spy network? Since Putin met with all 10 of the agents, it is safe to assume that none of them was the informer.

The first person the media and analysts named as the most probable informer was Sergei Tretyakov, a Russian spy who defected to the United States in 2000. But Tretyakov’s biographer, Pete Earley, insists that Tretyakov knew nothing about the 10 agents. Moreover, if Russian intelligence knew that Tretyakov was passing secret information on to the FBI about the 10 agents, surely the Foreign Intelligence Service would have evacuated the agents as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, there is one person left — spy No. 11, the most important figure in the network. I’m talking about Christopher Metsos. In contrast to the 10 clowns, Metsos was a top-level spy.

According to the official version, he apparently “fled” the United States to Cyprus, where he was arrested, released on parole and then disappeared. On the surface, this appears to be a blatant act of negligence by the FBI when it let Metsos leave the United States, particularly since he was supposedly under much heavier surveillance than the other 10 agents.

But maybe Metsos’ flight was just a smokescreen to cover up his work as a double agent. Maybe Metsos was a mole who was feeding the Foreign Intelligence Service false information while working for the Americans during the 2000s.

Another circumstance supporting this version is that no one is blaming the FBI for letting the ringleader go free.

Another strange thing: Why has Russia not said a word about its brilliant victory — that it was able to evacuate its top spy from Cyprus in a secret operation? To be sure, the security service is probably prohibited from giving details, but if Russia did, in fact, save Metsos, we would have surely heard bits and pieces of this amazing operation through leaks or anonymous sources.

The whole world is looking for Metsos, but maybe he is comfortably living in the United States, where he has been debriefed by the FBI and CIA and has already received a new name and face.

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*The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.*

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